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ABSTRACT

This monograph, one in a series on theory and educational issues in Australia, explores links between education and political and economic structures. Two sections provide an analysis of an education-work program and five readings. The Transition Education Program is described as a government response to the 1979 economic crisis. The policy and conventional economic theories are analyzed in view of Jurgen Habermas' theories of crisis tendencies of advanced capitalism. Habermas' schema is reflected in government's attempt to overcome the "legitimation crisis" by redirecting attention to education. The readings which follow also examine the links between education, economics, and politics. R. E. Young's "The Karmel and Williams Reports as Policy Theories" places the reports on education within theoretical frameworks to reveal assumptive values. B. Bessant and A. D. Spaull, in "The Australian Government and the Schools," detail government financing, attitudes, and politics behind the Karmel report. Economic influences on education since postwar years are discussed by P. Dwyer, B. Wilson, and R. Woock in "Education and Economic Policy." Change is explored within sociological frameworks to understand educational outcomes in L. E. Foster's "Social Policy and Educational Reform." In "The Control and Rationalisation of Schooling," M. Pusey argues that education in the 1980's is dominated by conflict over control. Entries include references; an annotated bibliography is appended. (CJH)

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Economics, politics and education

David Dawkins

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Sociology of the school

Economics, politics and education

DAVID DAWKINS

Deakin University

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This book forms part of the EED423 *Sociology of the School* course offered by the School of Education in Deakin University's Open Campus Program. It has been prepared for the EED423 *Sociology of the School* course team.

Course team
Lawrence Angus
David Dawkins (chairperson)
Kaye Lont (course developer)
Fazal Rizvi
Peter Watkins

Consultants
Jennifer Nias
Paige Porter

The course includes:
Lawrence Angus, *Schooling for Social Order*
David Dawkins, *Economics, Politics and Education*
Jennifer Nias, *Teacher Socialisation*
Paige Porter, *Gender and Education*
Fazal Rizvi, *Ethnicity, Class and Multicultural Education*
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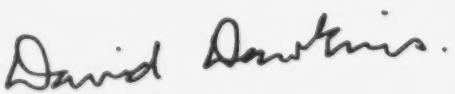
Series introduction

One feature of education is the gap that exists between academic interests and teacher practice. The theoretical and research interests of academics, on the one hand, are not readily available to teachers; the practical concerns of teachers, on the other hand, may not be taken account of by academics.

It is hoped that this series of monographs will provide a link between academic thought and research and the practice of teaching. Each volume in the series discusses contemporary educational issues and research in a way that can inform educational practice. They do not provide a set of prescriptive recommendations, but present a discussion of theory and research with the intention of highlighting the implications for educational practice in a way that can inform teachers.

The issues discussed in this monograph series include: the relationship between the political and economic institutions of society and the education system, suggesting a link between socio-political conditions and educational policies and programs; the experience of teaching, emphasising the importance of the self-concept of teachers in their socialisation into a professional role; ethnicity and multicultural policy, suggesting that these are best understood in terms of social class and what this might mean for teachers; a view of gender-related inequalities in education that suggests that these are best understood in terms of ideology about the family; the impact of new technology on society and the implications this may have for education; and the possibilities that confront the education system and the practising teacher.

It is hoped that these monographs will clarify some of the complex issues confronting educationists and will stimulate thought and discussion among teachers that will inform their own practice and add to the continuing debate.



David Dawkins
Course team chairperson

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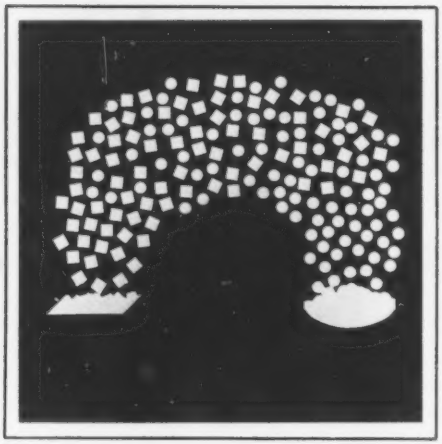


Introduction

The aim of this monograph is to indicate the close association that exists between the education system and the other major political and economic structures of society. In doing so it focuses its attention on a specific educational program, but not in order to comment on the program's presence in schools and colleges, nor to make statements about it in terms of curriculum or pedagogical processes. Instead it is concerned with examining the political and economic circumstances that constituted the context within which policy decisions were made that led to the development of the program.

The program in question is commonly known as the Transition Education Program. It was the school- and college-based program established to implement the Australian government's Transition from School to Work Policy. Questions concerning the presence of the program in the education system and its impact on the schools' curricula have been discussed elsewhere (Kemmis et al. 1983). Here we are concerned with questions concerning why it was thought necessary to develop the program in the first place, and secondly to consider for what purposes the program might have been implemented other than as a purely educational initiative. In exploring these questions we are inexorably drawn into the political and economic affairs of society and not merely confined within the education system.

In the pages that follow, although the aim is to further our understanding of the education system, we shall be primarily dealing with political and economic matters. Consequently, for much of the discussion there will be little direct reference to the education system, for it will first be necessary to develop some understanding about the political and economic processes of society that will enable us to observe the interrelationship between these structures and policy and program developments within education.

The main text of this monograph focuses closely on one educational program to argue that there is a close link between economics, politics and education, but in addition a number of readings are included that support this view. These additional readings broaden the argument by looking to various other government interventions and reports, and provide valuable supporting arguments that sustain the view put forward, viz. that education is not a professional activity that remains discrete from other social processes, but is inextricably bound up in the economic and political processes of society.

The contextual crises of transition education

When the Commonwealth government first announced the Transition from School to Work Policy to the Australian Senate in Canberra on 22 November 1979, the country was facing a state of economic crisis. Inflation was still high at 9.1 per cent, after having peaked at 15.1 per cent in both 1974 and 1975 under the administration of the previous Labor government (see Table 1). At the same time unemployment, then estimated at 6.6 per cent by the Commonwealth Employment Service (see Table 2), was higher than it had ever been since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

For the Liberal government announcing the policy, the situation was rather more serious than just being the worst economic crisis the country had faced since the depression years of the 1930s; it was, for them, also a crisis of credibility.

Table 1

Year	Inflation (%)	Wage rises (%)	Budget surplus (+) or deficit (−)	
1970	4.9	8.4	$201m+	(1969–70)
1971	7.2	10.3	$519m+	(1970–71)
1972	5.9	11.0	$405m+	(1971–72)
1973	9.5	8.9	$215m+	(1972–73)
1974	15.1	16.2	$211m+	(1973–74)
1975	15.1*	25.4	$1949m−	(1974–75)
1976	13.5	14.4	$2873m−	(1975–76)
1977	12.3	12.4	$1865m−	(1976–77)
1978	8.2	9.9	$2361m−	(1977–78)
1979	9.1	7.7	$2258m−	(1978–79)
1980	10.8	9.5	$567m−	(1979–80)

* Inflation was at its highest in January–March of 1975, when it reached 17.6 per cent (falling to 13–14 per cent within twelve months).

Source: Jones (1982, p. 134).

Table 2: Unemployment figures from the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for May each year

	CES (%)	ABS (%)
1970	1.0	1.3
1971	1.4	1.5
1972	1.9	2.0
1973	1.5	1.8
1974	2.1	1.6
1975	4.2	4.7
1976	4.3	4.4
1977	5.0	5.5
1978	6.1	6.2
1979	6.6	6.2
1980	6.5	6.2

Source: Jones (1982, p. 126).

This government had come to office by wresting power from its predecessors after having orchestrated a constitutional crisis which led to that government's dismissal by the Governor-General. The crisis developed over the opposition parties' refusal to pass a Supply Bill in the Senate, and reached its climax with the Governor-General's dismissal of the elected government. It goes without saying that this course of action was regarded as somewhere between being responsible or outrageous according to commentators' own political allegiance.

The Liberal Party fought and won the subsequent election on the issue of the management of the country's economy. Their action of blocking the Supply Bills in the Senate, which consequently generated the constitutional crisis culminating in the dismissal of the Labor government, was rationalised to the public as the only responsible course of action in view of the state of the economy. This they claimed to be in a state of crisis due to the alleged economic incompetence of the Labor government. The Liberals won the election with a campaign promising more capable economic management, during which they used the slogan 'Turn on the Lights', which graphically alluded to conditions in the Second World War and suggested the return to 'normal' conditions under their administration after the experience of privation and chaos under Labor.

Thus, after having come to power in 1975 on the grounds of superior economic management, and pointing to statistical evidence of inflation and unemployment to justify their claims, this same party, still in office in 1979, was now faced with statistical evidence suggesting not only a continuing but a worsening economic crisis. Because of the events of November 1975, the crisis for this government was not merely an economic one but was also a crisis of confidence. Indeed, it was a situation displaying all the crisis tendencies of advanced capitalism as proposed by Habermas (1975), viz. crisis in the economy, rationality crisis in politics, legitimation crisis in social institutions and motivation crisis in society.

A note of caution should be given here to say that in applying Habermas's theory to Australian conditions in the late 1970s I will be relying on his earlier formulations in *Legitimation Crisis* (1976). Since then Habermas, in response to criticisms (Thompson & Held 1982) has modified his early proposals. It should also be understood that these ideas are still open to further revision as Habermas, whose ideas and writings are very complex, takes the debate further. Nevertheless, the early formulation of this theory is probably the most useful source for the purpose of this monograph, being the clearest statement of it.

The particular manifestations of crisis existing in Australia in 1979 will be outlined below, but before doing so it is worth briefly examining some theories concerning crisis in capitalist societies. Since this is not a study in economics the discussion will be cursory and limited, nevertheless it is worth digressing in this small way, partly to better understand why successive Australian governments have acted as they have done and partly to give perspective to Habermas's theory of crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism.

Conventional economic theories of crisis in capitalism

Economic crisis is endemic to capitalist societies, and a massive amount of energy is expended in observing and commenting upon economic fluctuations in society. The aim of this is to facilitate appropriate manipulation of the economy in order to contain and expand various elements to some extent and thus to 'control' crises. As James O'Connor puts it,

> The explosion of world economic, social, and political crises since the late 1960s has inspired prodigious theoretical work by scholars of all political

> persuasions. These efforts originally converged on problems of theoretically defining and empirically identifying economic crisis tendencies and crisis symptoms. The economists defined economic crisis in terms of inflation, over-expansion of credit, slow productivity growth, high energy costs, international monetary disequilibria, and so on. The Marxists defined crisis in terms of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Crisis was the turning point when 'producible commodities cannot be sold profitably, thus preventing the realization of profits and their transmission into additional capital'. Crisis was also identified with the appearance of certain weaknesses in capital's system of domination of the labour process and working class.
>
> (O'Connor 1981, p. 109)

Speaking about the American economy, O'Connor argues that during the 1960s and 1970s there was a decline in the rate of profit accompanied by inflation, and industrial and social unrest leading to an investment strike in the mid-1970s. The recession of 1974 led to a restructuring of capital in the late 1970s/early 1980s which required

> a massive reduction in working class living standards. In the U.S.A. inflation and taxation were beginning to reduce average real wages and salaries as early as the late 1960s. Unions increasingly were willing to accept pay cuts and poorer working conditions. Social services were allowed to deteriorate and were actively cut back. Capital used more 'illegal workers' whose wages are below average and whose labor-power is more exploitable because there are few unions and public regulations governing safety conditions, child labor, and working conditions generally. Meanwhile capital mounted an anti-union offensive the likes of which have not been seen in the U.S.A. since the 1920s. Millions were given to anti-unions political candidates through new corporate Political Action Committees. This was accompanied by an unprecedented ideological offensive against state regulation, rent control, welfare, public education, etc. Speedups in the factories, modernisation of productive facilities, and the re-creation of small-scale production and 'home work' must also be mentioned. Finally, capital dispersed the working class geographically with the internationalization of production and the decentralization of production units into small towns and rural areas.
>
> (O'Connor 1981, p. 110)

While exact parallels cannot be drawn, nevertheless there is a very familiar ring to these words which do have some correspondence to the Australian situation, and indeed O'Connor quite correctly goes on to say:

> Most economists and social theorists argue that modern capitalism is a truly international system hence that accumulation crisis tendencies are international phenomena. This means that crisis theory should be located in the specific conjunctural circumstances in world capitalism today. The crisis, however, affects different parts of world capitalism in different ways. Austerity budgets, youth unemployment, inflation, and sharp increases in energy costs appear to be worldwide phenomena.
>
> (O'Connor 1981, p. 111)

Commentators certainly agree that similar crisis conditions to those outlined by O'Connor above for the United States of America from the late 1960s onwards also existed in Australia (Gilmour & Lansbury 1978; Windschuttle 1979; Theophanous 1980; Jones 1982). They also share the view that the Australian economy was characterised by a long period of boom conditions after the Second World War, which continued until the late 1960s due to an expansion of the industrialised base established

during the war and growing demands for the 'new' consumer produce of industrialisation, such as refrigerators, washing machines and motor cars, which had formerly been the luxury goods of the privileged few. During this period there had been a series of crises but the shock of these had been largely contained by the sustained demand for the new consumer goods of industrialism, thus contributing to the situation where crises in the Australian capitalist economy were conventionally regarded as attributable to errors of management rather than a quality inherent in capitalism itself.

Windschuttle (1979, p. 19) argues that the boom conditions following the Second World War were mistakenly regarded as a situation that could be permanently maintained by the application of Keynesian techniques of managing demand through controls on liquidity and credit. The minor recessions recorded in 1952–53, 1956–57, 1965–66 and 1971–72 were, he suggests, thought of as the result of economic management errors in the application of the Keynesian techniques. The highest recorded levels of unemployment during these 'recessions' was around 2 per cent of the workforce. In the June quarter of 1983, after the adoption of Friedmanite economics, the unemployment rate had soared to 11 per cent (see Table 3).

The economic orthodoxy of this period of relative growth during the 1950s and 1960s was based on Keynesian principles which argued that the economy was geared to effective demand. Money supply and interest rates were of secondary importance to the view that production and employment were determined by demand, hence the belief that crisis tendencies were the result of errors of management in stimulating demand appropriately. However, as recession descended on the Western economies, Keynesian economic theory was displaced by the monetarist theories of Milton Friedman. The position in the United States of America, which was essentially the same as in Australia, is succinctly described by O'Connor, who says:

> Hence in the 1950s, it also became increasingly clear that traditional demand management, married or not to price–wage controls, failed to make the crucial distinction between consumption and investment demand, or wages and profits. It was increasingly thought that simple Keynesian demand management was an ineffective way to promote capital accumulation and economic growth, however useful in relation to stabilizing the capitalist cycle. By 1960, neo-Keynesian economics, the principles of which were developed in the 1930s by the Keynesian Marxists (e.g., Kalecki) and the Keynesians themselves in the 1940s (e.g., Harrod and Domar), began to replace traditional 'depression Keynesian' thinking within the circle of economic planners. Under the intellectual leadership of James Tobin and others, President John Kennedy began to tilt economic policy towards the expansion of profits and investment spending. Meanwhile political considerations forced the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon governments to persist in tax, spending, and credit policies which also enlarged working class income and spending. In short, the economists and politicians were trying to follow a policy of capitalist accumulation which at the same time was passively accepted by the masses hence politically legitimate and/or consensual.
>
> With the onset of the economic crisis in the late 1960s, and especially at the end of the inflation-ridden 1970s, the economists increasingly argued that expansionary fiscal and money policies, in particular policies which aimed to increase consumption, consumer credit, and the social budget, were no

Table 3: Unemployment rates

	Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work	Total
	Aged 15–19 years	Aged 20 and older	Total		
Year[1]					
1980–81	17.2	4.3	5.8	6.0	5.9
1981–82	17.5	4.7	6.1	6.4	6.2
1982–83	23.6	7.7	9.3	7.2	9.0
Three months to[2]					
1982 November	21.2	6.8	8.3	7.1	8.1
1983 February	24.5	8.2	9.8	6.9	9.3
May	27.2	8.9	10.8	7.6	10.2
August	27.3	9.0	10.8	7.6	10.3
November	26.5	8.6	10.4	7.8	10.0
Month[1]					
1983 June	27.1	9.3	11.0	6.9	10.3
July	28.1	8.8	10.7	8.1	10.3
August	26.7	9.0	10.7	7.7	10.2
September	27.5	8.8	10.7	8.7	10.4
October	26.3	8.7	10.5	6.9	9.9
November	25.6	8.3	10.0	7.9	9.6

[1] Rates for each financial year are based on an average of seasonally unadjusted monthly data for the year.
[2] Seasonally adjusted.
Source: *Round-up of Economics Statistics* (1983, p. 17)

> longer solutions to capitalist crisis tendencies but were instead capitalism's major problem. Too much consumption, too little investment and production became big business's main slogan . . . Big capital argued more and more forcefully in favor of reversing consumption-oriented incentives provided by inflation, increased social security, progressive income taxation, and ceilings on interest rates. It became an open secret that these policy prescriptions would lead to serious recession precisely because consumption, not investment, spending led the way in economic recoveries after 1975 . . .
>
> Meanwhile the counter-revolution in economic policy promoted by big capital found echoes and justification within academic circles. Academic sociologists had argued for a long time that in a high consumption economy traditional impulse controls become unhinged and the work ethic problematic, and that balances between work and consumption can be restored only at a different and unknown level of personality integration . . . Academic economists in the U.S.A. meanwhile began a counter-revolution in economic theory which gathered more and more strength in theoretical and policy-making circles from the mid-1960s through the 1970s. Led by Friedman monetarists and renegade Keynesians, by the late 1970s perhaps the majority of the bourgeois economic profession has surrendered to this 'Restoration' . . .
>
> In this view, which today is the dominant view in the industrial countries, especially the U.S.A., the economic problem is remediable through the normal working mechanisms of the market; i.e. unemployment, austerity, and a purge of the system's fat tissues especially the heavy layer of unreal popular expectations created by irresponsible politicians and bureaucrats.
>
> (O'Connor 1981, pp. 114–15, 116–17)

O'Connor's essential argument is that during the 'boom' period following the Second World War the working class in the U.S.A. made considerable gains in living standards, and that following on from a decline in

profit during the 1960s and early 1970s there was a counter-attack by capital eager to maintain its position at the expense of a reduction in the living standards of the working class. This was achieved on one hand by an 'investment strike' (e.g. the investment of business in off-shore locations such as Hong Kong and the closure of domestic plants), and on the other hand by economic/political measures (such as a 'credit squeeze' accompanied by a cutback in a whole range of social and welfare expenditure) which employed the monetarist policies of Friedmanite economics.

Windschuttle (1979, p. 20) argues that both the Liberal and the Labor parties abandoned Keynesian economics in favour of Friedmanite economics in the 1970s, when a crucial assumption of the former orthodoxy—the belief that there was always a trade-off between inflation and unemployment—was upset. He points out that in 1972, when the Liberals were in government, and in 1974–75, when Labor was in office, both inflation and unemployment grew at the same time. He goes on to argue that this led both parties to adopt the monetarist doctrines of Milton Friedman.

Theophanous (1980), however, adds a further element to the debate. While agreeing that there was indeed a shift of faith away from Keynesian to the reassertion of Friedmanite economics in the mid-1970s and that this was indicative of an organisation by capital against the working class in order to preserve its own position at the expense of reducing workers' living standards, he also argues that in Australia capital was faced with a more acute threat in the presence of a reformist Labor government which may not be in tune with the demands of capital. It was this perceived threat that, in his view, ultimately led to the dismissal of the Whitlam government. In addition to Theophanous's point of view it should perhaps be commented that the Whitlam government was tolerated in the first half of its existence because capital thought that increased welfare spending would placate the workers, but not in the second half because it became evident that it did not do so.

Theophanous (1980, p. 258) describes the Whitlam government as a coalition of centrists and social welfarists on the one hand and socialists seeking a redistribution of wealth on the other, which is why it was such a reformist government. Where they disagreed, he argues, is in the effect of reform:

> An example is the redistribution of wealth and services to achieve more equality; this is a platform on which both the centre and left group can agree. Both feel that it is necessary for the state to intervene to redistribute wealth and services (through, for example, free education services, free health services) in favour of the poor and needy. Yet while both groups can agree on this redistribution, they disagree about its impact on the capitalist economy.
>
> (Theophanous 1980, pp. 258–9)

Theophanous argues that on one hand Whitlam and his fellow social welfare technocrats believed the capitalist system to be extremely strong and able to bear such expenditure, while on the other hand the socialists believed that redistributive efforts would squeeze the economy, but were none the less committed to social reform. Such differences in theoretical

debate on outcomes are easy to accommodate within a party in opposition, and can be patronised by those in power, but when in government it is a different matter. Thus Theophanous argues that in addition to a growing economic crisis sweeping international capitalism, this was exacerbated in Australia by a reformist government. Against these two crises, capital organised itself. He gives an account (1980, pp. 328 ff.) of how he believes capital mobilised its opposition against Whitlam, and particularly the role of the media in convincing the public that the Labor government was 'reprehensible' and riddled with 'scandal'. The result, as he sees it, was that,

> At first reluctant to abandon his cherished welfare programmes and his plans to bring mineral resources under government control, Whitlam finally buckled under the demands of the ruling class (which he represented as merely the demands of the economic situation). However, by this stage the mobilization against him had reached an irreversible stage: it was too little, too late as far as the ruling class was concerned.
>
> (Theophanous 1980, p. 261)

Windschuttle (1979, p. 281) concurs, saying that the Labor Party has had to become more attuned to the demands of employers and the media. In a later book (Windschuttle 1984) he points out that it should of course be realised that the demands of employers are the demands of capital and that the news media provides a support structure for capital (see Windschuttle 1984).

In summary then, it is reasonable to argue that in 1975 the Liberal party came to power under circumstances which were highly contentious, and that the economy was in a state of crisis greater than at any time since the Great Depression. In addition it can be noted that this crisis was one shared by Western capitalism in general, but was to some extent magnified by the reformist policies of the Australian Labor government which was willing to attempt social reforms within the capitalist framework but not political reforms which would alter the economic base. Moreover, the world-wide economic crisis of capitalism was marked by the reassertion of Friedmanite economic theory, an orthodoxy which legitimised the reduction of working-class conditions in support of capital. (Habermas (1975, p. 50) of course argues that the fundamental contradiction of capitalism lies in the distinction between private appropriation and social production, i.e. between capital's pursuit of the maximisation of profit and the provision of social benefits for society.)

This was also true of both major Australian political parties, which showed very little difference from each other by the end of 1975 (in fact it has been argued that this was so even before the dismissal in 1975, e.g. see Catley & McFarlane 1974). It has been said that

> Once safely in Opposition, the Labor Party's public statements began to blame the Liberal–Country party government for unemployment. The basic message became that the coalition government was deflating *too* quickly, was *too* obsessed with the budget deficit, was cutting government capital expenditure *too* quickly, was *too* concerned with the real wage overhang, was trying to get corporate profits up *too* quickly and was *too* vigorous in its pursuit of 'welfare cheats' and 'dole bludgers'. In each case the

> comparative qualification had to be made since in each case it had been the Labor government which had initiated these policies in 1975 . . .
>
> In essence, then, the two major political parties have adopted similar postures on the economic recession and unemployment. When in government both have been prepared to accept rising unemployment and have pursued policies designed to lay the basis for an economic recovery dependent on corporate investment programs. In opposition both have blamed the incumbent party for the recession and have offered 'responsible economic management' *without* the promise of full employment in the foreseeable future. This strongly suggests that to understand the reasons for the present mass unemployment we should look further than the gyrations of party politics and at the social forces which determine production and distribution in Australia.
>
> (Abbey & Catley 1980, p. 200)

While it is not possible to undertake here the type of social analysis advocated by Abbey & Catley above, nevertheless it can be agreed with them that there was little to differentiate between the two (ostensibly ideologically opposed) political parties. Furthermore, one might speculate about the social forces capable of dominating political institutions so successfully. History was to show that the Friedmanite economics employed from 1975 onwards were to be no more successful in averting economic crisis than the Keynesian economics it displaced, and things were to get much worse by November 1979.

Crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism

Keynesian and Friedmanite economic theories share a common commitment to capitalism. Each, when in vogue, was the economic orthodoxy of its day, but as indicated in the previous section, both confined their critique to aspects of economic management and not to that of capitalism as a system. From this perspective, therefore, crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism are perceived as problems of steerage and balance, evoking metaphors like 'avoiding the rapids' or 'walking a tightrope', etc. As was also indicated above, both major political parties in Australia also accept capitalism as a base system with little question, to the extent that there is little ideological difference between them. Labor has its Socialist Left and Liberals have their Fascist Right, to be sure, and each has differences in bias towards welfare for the poor or profits to investment, but in commitment to capitalism as a system they tend to differ very little. Consequently the popular orthodoxies of economic theory provide no social critique of capitalism.

Marxist economic theory does provide such a critique, but in Australia, and probably in most if not all capitalist societies, Marxist and neo-Marxist social analyses are to be found only on the political fringes to the Left or in academe, where they can safely exist in evidence of a free open society without disturbing the base system. It is, indeed, significant that at the time of writing, after more than a decade of economic crisis which has seen the failure of the economic orthodoxies to restore full employment and living standards, there is still no popular critique of the economic base.

However, there are also difficulties to be perceived in the economic theorising of Marxist structuralism. In Marx's theory, outlined in Vol. III

of *Capital* (Marx 1909), economic crisis came from the tendency in capitalism towards over-production which leads to a fall in profit. The result of this, he argued, would be for capitalists to reduce new investment, reduce production, and sack workers. Depression was therefore a state of reduced profits, reduced investment, and increased unemployment. Recovery came when the weaker capitalists withdrew from competitive production and the survivors gradually increased production and employed more workers as demand grew. His thesis was, therefore, that capitalism worked in a cyclical series of booms and depressions, a view that finds considerable support in orthodox economic theory concerned with 'managing' the economy, ostensibly aimed at placing economic fluctuations under some control. However, economic orthodoxy focuses on management problems to the extent that it is not only grounded in capitalist ideology, but also seeks to legitimate it (Boreham & Dow 1980, vol. 1, p. 4), whereas Marxism regards the cycle of crisis and recovery as unavoidably endemic to the process of capitalism, and goes so far as to suggest that this would culminate in a catastropic crisis which would ultimately destroy it.

Political economy is a highly developed branch of social science (see for example the several contributions in Boreham & Dow 1980) and far more complex that this rather simplistic account is capable of elucidating here. Nevertheless, there are three points worth making. Firstly, as indicated in the remarks of Windschuttle quoted above, there is the failure of orthodox economic theories to explain or confront the simultaneous occurrence of inflation and unemployment (stagflation) experienced in the current economic crisis. Secondly, there is a long-held opinion among social critics to the Left that unemployment is not only a cyclical effect of crises in capitalism, but is also an intended consequence of capital designed to create a more malleable pool of labour, i.e. the reserve army of the unemployed. Beresford & McFarlane (1980) refer to the work of Michal Kalecki in the 1940s, and say,

> The conclusion Kalecki draws from [his] analysis of the attitudes to full employment is that a powerful coalition will form, made up of capitalists—both industrial and *rentier*—who have become 'boom tired'. In a period of sustained full employment, 'the workers would get "out of hand" and the "captains of industry" would be anxious to "teach them a lesson".' This 'boom tiredness' on the part of industrialists need not necessarily coincide with a redistribution of income from profits to wages or a fall in the rate of profits. Under 'normal' boom conditions . . . increases in money wages will be met by increased prices so that profit margins are maintained. The pressure from industrialists for the government to introduce a deflationary policy will be from those who wish to create for themselves an 'industrial reserve army', to restore discipline to the workforce and raise its productivity.
> (Beresford & McFarlane 1980, p. 228)

While it is going too far to suggest that capitalist employers are entirely responsible for the current stagflationary crisis as a contrived action against the working class, one must also bear in mind the remarks by O'Connor quoted above referring to an 'investment strike', and the gubernatorial coup against the Whitlam government. This latter event brings me to the third point, viz. that capital will seek to control government

policy since this activity by the state is the translation of economic theory into practice which effectively steers the economy.

> The combined power of [capital] will, according to Kalecki, suffice to ensure that governments will adopt an orthodox policy of cutting down the budget deficit. It makes no difference what the political persuasion of the government is at the time. A conservative government (the Liberal–Country Party coalition in Australia) is directly linked to big business and professes to act in its interests. A social-democratic party (such as the Australian Labor Party), while it may profess to be the party of the working class and have a 'socialization objective', will nevertheless be swayed by the threat of a 'strike of capital' if the government's commitment to a 'full employment objective' leads to a failure of 'confidence'. We have heard many times in the 1970s in Australia, the cry from ALP politicians and their advisers, that it is impossible for the government to redistribute income in favour of wages because this destroys the 'incentive to invest' on the part of employers.
>
> (Beresford & McFarlane 1980, p. 228)

The weight of considered opinion is that in capitalist societies, the ruling class contains a solid core representative of capital, who do indeed rule; not, however, in an overtly autocratic style, but in the process of hegemony which exudes the deceptively alluring rationale of pragmatic necessity.

As O'Connor says of the need to 'sell' productivity economics to the electorate,

> The idea that the restoration of 'free enterprise' is the crucial need is absurd on its face given the monopoly power of the giant transnational corporations and the requirement that in energy, transit, health, and other fields the state must play an active rather than passive role in the process of capital restructuring. Hence it is no surprise that austerity policies mislabelled productivity policies are not being implemented (when they are in fact implemented at all) in the context of a coherent plan but in rather fragmentary and ad hoc ways. Political legitimation requires that policies attacking the working class be sneaked in through the back door meanwhile stamped with the label 'productivity'. There is no politician in the country who believes that it would be possible to put together a 'productivity coalition' which would include the organized working class and urban voting blocks to win consensus for policies designed to restore profitable conditions of accumulation by such measures as: eliminating 'inefficient enterprises' and modernizing large-scale capital hence creating more unemployment and poverty; relocating industry to cheap labour areas with the effect of lowering average wages; deregulating [oil] and other policies which increase energy prices and lower real wages; reprivatizing and reducing social services and lowering the social wage; reducing the real value of social security because of so-called short-falls in the social security fund; restoring traditional disciplinary mechanisms in the schools and family and reviving the draft with the effect of reintensifying racism and classism; utilizing the unemployment insurance system to enforce greater labor mobility and uprooting more working class families; forcing union construction workers to labor side by side [with] non-union workers and opening up more fissures within the working class; establishing new union contracts which break union control of work rules and work assignments thus antagonizing workers who believed if they worked hard they could retain good, steady jobs; ad nauseam. Not even passive support much less active participation can be expected for these kinds of class policies taken as a whole.
>
> (O'Connor 1981, p. 120)

These, of course, are precisely the policies we find being implemented throughout the advanced capitalist world during the current crisis.

Abbey & Catley (1980) argue that the process by which the ruling class force their will upon government is rather less subtle than the process by which O'Connor suggests government, and behind government the ruling class, needs to 'sell' the policies to the people. They say:

> The Liberal and Country Parties make no bones about being parties representing business interests and pursuing business confidence: they merely argue that this is a necessary task in a capitalist order and brings greatest benefit for all sections of society. The political leadership of the labour movement, in which socialist and anti-business ideals are rampant, needs to be periodically educated to the same position. The literature which discusses how this is achieved is enormous but we may single out the most important elements in the 1970s re-education campaign of the Australian Labor Party's leadership. First, it was taught by the 1972 election victory that federal elections could be only won with the approval of large sections of big business, and therefore of the corporate media. Secondly, it was taught in 1974–5 that if, once in office, it sought to embark on policies contrary to the interests of business and the media it could be successfully de-stabilised and purged. Thirdly, it was taught in 1977 that it must move further to the Right—as the coalition parties had done in 1975—and accept a disciplined economy with continuing unemployment if it were not to be ridiculed in subsequent election campaigns. Finally, it was being cautioned in 1978 that it might be supported by business in an election campaign if it volunteered essentially the same policies as Fraser with an assurance that it would use its affiliations with organized labour to curb the wave of strikes which Fraser's naked confrontationist policies were threatening to produce. Instrumental in each of these lessons was the advice of the media, big business in conferences, the upper echelons of the public service and professional orthodox economists. Thereby does the leadership of the Labor Party become not the representative of the interests of the labour movement and the conduit for its views, but instead willingly accepts the constraints, concern and at last the imperatives implied by the form of the bourgeois democratic state.
>
> (Abbey & Catley 1980, pp. 209–10)

None of this happens, however, in any fundamentally logical way. Governments make decisions which determine the health of the economy, decisions that will have drastic consequences for certain social groups; they have economic advisors committed to various theoretical views that persuade them to make particular decisions; they have pressure groups lobbying them to act in specific ways which serve their own interests, groups which can exert varying degrees of coercion on the government. Nevertheless, there is no simple and direct line of authority from power elites through to government policy, an oligarchic process of control, but rather there is a plurality of groups competing with different degrees of socio-political power to serve particular interests, a process in which the economically powerful few must persuade the less powerful numerical majority that what governments decide is in their interests, thus giving legitimacy to decisions which may reduce their living standards, i.e. a hegemonic process of control. Moreover, this process is further complicated by the fragmentation of society into a multitude of groups, such as individual businesses and trade unions, which may have common objectives but act in their own interests. The capitalist economy may be 'steered' by a central government, but at the same time it is based on

entrepreneurial decisions within thousands of businesses in the competitive pursuit of their own profit.

In this sense, in times of economic crisis the government is in the same position as the driver of a bus with failed brakes running out of control. Its journey is determined by factors out of the driver's control, like the gradient, camber, and surface of the road, and what bends and obstructions lie ahead. While able to steer the bus, the driver may ultimately have to choose between the interests of the passengers and/or the boss, and the interests of some other group, and he may then have to decide whether to crash the bus into a cliff or run through a group of pedestrians. The decision may be based on some clear rational choices, such as in favour of the lives of children rather than the aged, but may also be clouded by irrationalities, such as fearing to scratch the paintwork, or the driver may even be incapable of any choices by reason of being frozen with fear. Likewise governments do not necessarily act in the best interests of the economic prosperity of society on the basis of the 'best' economic advice, assuming that the 'best' is available. They balance this against the interest of particular groups that they represent or fear, or may act purely in their own electoral interests, or may be totally confused and irrational in their decisions. To explore these possibilities further we must look to Habermas's discussion of crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism in his book *Legitimation Crisis* (1975).

Habermas's theory of crisis tendencies

In the previous section it was noted that critical theory differs from Marxist orthodoxy by having the clear view that given the changed circumstances of contemporary capitalism a more developed critique must be evolved. Indeed, capitalism has proved to be much more flexible than previously thought by Marxists, and much more adaptable than thought by traditional theorists. Thus Habermas says, in the preface of *Legitimation Crisis*,

> The application of the Marxian theory of crisis to the altered reality of 'advanced capitalism' leads to difficulties. This fact has given rise to interesting attempts to conceive of old theorems in new ways or, alternatively, to develop new crisis theorems in their place.
>
> (Habermas 1975, p. xxv)

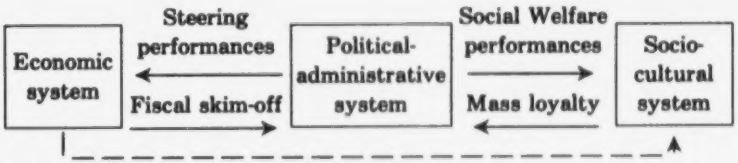
Habermas's argument focuses on advanced capitalist societies, but he begins with a discussion of class societies from primitive civilisations through traditional-modern societies (distinguished by 'political class-rule') and liberal-capitalist societies (distinguished by 'unpolitical class-rule'), to current manifestations of advanced capitalist and post-capitalist (stratified state-socialist) societies. His interest lies

> in exploring the possibilities of a 'post-modern' society—that is, a historically new principle of organization and not a different name for the surprising vigor of an aged capitalism. I would like to illustrate what is meant by social principles of organization and how definite types of crisis can be derived from them in terms of three social formations.
>
> (Habermas 1975, p. 17)

These three are primitive, traditional and liberal-capitalist social formation.

He provides this discussion as a preparation from which to develop his own theorems of crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism. To achieve this, Habermas has proposed a structural view of social systems which also incorporates interactive analysis, for it is his view that neither a purely structural analysis, or one which discounts or ignores the influence of structure, is useful. Therefore he proposes a schema which links the political system in a superordinate relationship with both the socio-cultural and the economic systems in an interactive process (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Habermas's pre-political determinants of the normative systems



Source: Habermas (1975, p. 5).

Although the social welfare performances of the administrative system are important in sustaining mass loyalty from the socio-cultural system, the administrative system also has a vital function to perform in steering the economic system by regulating the economic cycle (global planning) and establishing favourable conditions for the utilisation of excess capital. Habermas thus argues that the state has tended to replace the market mechanisms of liberal capitalism. He says:

> While global planning manipulates the boundary conditions of decisions made by private enterprise in order to correct the market mechanism with respect to dysfunctional secondary effects the state actually *replaces* the market mechanism whenever it creates and improves conditions for the realization of capital.
>
> (Habermas 1975, p. 35)

He takes this argument further when he describes the economic system in the following words:

> During the sixties, various authors, using the United States as an example, developed a three-sector model based on the distinction between the private and the public sectors. According to the model, private production is market-oriented, one sub-sector still being regulated by competition while the other is determined by the market strategies of oligopolies that tolerate a 'competitive fringe'. By contrast, in the public sector, especially in the armaments and space-travel industries, huge concerns have arisen whose investment decisions can be made almost without regard for the market. These concerns are either enterprises directly controlled by the state or private firms living on government contracts. In the monopolistic and the public sectors, capital-intensive industries predominate; in the competitive sector, labour-intensive industries predominate. In the monopolistic and public sectors, companies are faced with strong unions. In the competitive sector workers are less well

organised, and wage levels are correspondingly different. In the monopolistic sector, we can observe relatively rapid advances in production. In the public sector, companies do not need to be rationalized to the same extent. In the competitive sector, they cannot be.

(Habermas 1975, p. 34)

This is generally true of Australia, although in the absence of large armaments and space-travel industries the place is occupied by telecommunications and power supply industries.

The important point he makes here is that there has developed a much closer link between the state administrative system and the economic system, which creates a greater need for legitimation of the state, since this no longer 'merely secures the conditions of production' but is 'actively engaged in it'. It should also be understood that the link Habermas points to between the state and the economic system includes participation in this process by the education system. This coincides with O'Connor's view that education, along with other social institutions is also 'implicated in capitalist accumulation' (O'Connor 1981, p. 121). However, a system of legitimation is required which gives the illusion of democracy while denying participation. It is worth quoting Habermas at length on this, where he says:

> The arrangement of formal democratic institutions and procedures permits administrative decisions to be made largely independently of specific motives of the citizens. This takes place through a legitimation process that elicits generalized motives—that is, diffuse mass loyalty—but avoids participation. This structural alteration of the bourgeois public realm . . . provides for application of institutions and procedures that are democratic in form, while the citizenry in the midst of an objectively . . . political society, enjoy the status of passive citizens with only the right to withhold acclamation. Private autonomous investment decisions thus have their necessary complement in the civic privation of the civil public.
>
> In the structurally depoliticized public realm, the need for legitimation is reduced to two residual requirements: The first, civic privatism—that is, political abstinence combined with an orientation to career, leisure and consumption . . .—promotes the expectation of suitable rewards within the system (money, leisure time, and security). This privatism is taken into account by a welfare-state substitute program, which also incorporates elements of an achievement ideology transferred to the education system. Secondly, the structural depoliticization itself requires justification, which is supplied either by democratic elite theories (which go back to Schumpeter and Max Weber) or by technocratic systems theories (which go back to the institutionalism of the twenties). In the history of bourgeois social science, these theories today have a function similar to that of the classical doctrine of political economy. In earlier phases of capitalist development, the latter doctrine suggested the 'naturalness' of the capitalist economic society.
>
> (Habermas 1975, pp. 36–7)

Herein lies the basis for his argument that economic crisis has further accompanying crises for advanced capitalist societies.

These crises arise at different points and take different forms. Habermas identifies four possible types of crisis, which he proposes in the following table (Table 4).

Table 4

Point of origin	System crisis	Identity crisis
Economic system	Economic crisis	-
Political system	Rationality crisis	Legitimation crisis
Socio-cultural system	-	Motivation crisis

Source: Habermas (1976, p. 45).

As can be seen from Figure 1, each systemic part of society interrelates to the others in a system of inputs and outputs. Crisis tendencies arise, according to Habermas, when there is a breakdown in requisite items from one system to another. Thus there is a crisis if

- the economic system does not produce the requisite quantity of consumable values, or;
- the administrative system does not produce the requisite quantity of rational decisions, or;
- the legitimation system does not provide the requisite quantity of generalized motivations, or;
- the socio-cultural system does not generate the requisite quantity of action-motivating meaning.

(Habermas 1975, p. 49)

Economic crisis is easiest to understand, if for no other reason than that the supply of goods and profits is the most closely watched function in capitalist society. However, it is of interest to read Habermas's assertion that, 'The disturbances of liberal capitalism were output crises' (Habermas 1975, p. 45), and, 'If economic crisis tendencies persist in advanced capitalism, this indicates that government actions intervening in the realization process obey, no less than exchange processes, spontaneously working economic laws' (p. 45). Because of this the state cannot compensate for any tendency to the fall in the rate of profit because of economic crisis, but can only at best mediate in this. Economic crisis, therefore, may also provoke political and social crisis in class opposition.

Crisis in the political system is a rationality crisis, and occurs when the state is unsuccessful in its attempts to mediate economic crisis, i.e. when it is unable to make the correct decisions to restore the balance of production and profits. This failure can provoke legitimation crisis through the withdrawal of mass loyalty to the state administrative system. Habermas says:

> The rationality crisis is a displaced systemic crisis which, like economic crisis, expresses the contradiction between socialized production for non-generalizable interests and steering imperatives. This crisis tendency is converted into the withdrawal of legitimation by way of a disorganization of the state apparatus. The legitimation crisis, by contrast, is directly an identity crisis. It does not proceed by way of endangering system integration, but results from the fact that the fulfillment of governmental planning tasks places in question the structure of the depoliticized public realm and, thereby, the formally democratic securing of the private autonomous disposition of the means of production.
>
> (Habermas 1975, p. 46)

Habermas argues that since the socio-cultural system receives its input from the other systems, when output crisis occurs in either of these, input disturbance takes place in the socio-cultural system. Indeed he argues that they can only break out through the socio-cultural system, and consequently leads to a withdrawal of legitimation. He says:

> The aforementioned crisis tendencies can break out only through the socio-cultural system. For the social integration of a society is dependent on the output of this system—directly on the motivations it supplies to the political system in the form of legitimation and indirectly on the motivations to perform it supplies to the educational and occupational systems. Since the socio-cultural system does not, in contrast to the economic system, organize its own input, there can be no socio-culturally produced input crisis. Crises that arise at this point are always output crises. We have to reckon with cultural crisis tendencies when the normative structures change, according to their inherent logic, in such a way that the complementarity between the requirements of the state apparatus and the occupational system, on the one hand, and the interpreted needs and legitimate expectations of members of society, on the other, is disturbed. Legitimation crises result from a need for legitimation that arises from changes in the political system (even when normative structures remain unchanged) and that cannot be met by the existing supply of legitimation. Motivational crises, on the other hand, are a result of changes in the socio-cultural system itself.
>
> (Habermas 1975, p. 48)

Habermas's theory of the crisis tendencies of advanced capitalism can be successfully applied to the crisis situation in Australia at the time when the Transition from School to Work Policy was announced. At that time there was unquestionably a crisis in the economy, and evidence that there was a rationality crisis in politics accompanied by legitimation crisis, and in addition motivational crisis in the socio-cultural system.

As a final note in this section you are reminded, as was previously indicated, that there are difficulties with Habermas's theory. His writing is complex, and perhaps made more difficult for us in translation from the German. His ideas are also changing, so that his latest ideas are a refinement of his original argument. One thing worth noting that he makes clearer is that there is no necessary causal progression from economic crisis through to motivation crisis. Economic crisis may dissolve into rationality, legitimation and motivation crises, but not necessarily so. Indeed he even argues that 'Now I would rather conceive of motivation crisis as a parallel case to legitimation crisis' (Thompson & Held 1982, p. 281). Nevertheless, his earlier work can be used by us in the examination of our own society.

Economic and political-administrative systems in crisis

At the beginning of this monograph evidence was provided (Tables 1 and 2) to show that the Australian economy was in a state of crisis. Inflation, which peaked in 1975 and fell to 8.2 per cent in 1978 under the Fraser government, began to rise again in 1979, although not to the previous high level. However, unemployment figures continued their relentless climb until these also peaked at 10.7 per cent in September 1983 (Table 3). From whatever perspective, be it Marxist, or a conservatively orthodox economist's viewpoint, or indeed that of the unaligned workers, things looked bad.

Some earlier reactions to the crisis have been noted, particularly the shift from Keynesian to Friedmanite economic theory by both major political parties. However, in the Opposition Liberal Party this change was mainly brought about by the selection of Malcolm Fraser as its new leader after his successful *putsch* against its former leader, Billy Snedden, in March 1975, for Fraser was a firm advocate of Friedmanite monetarist policies. The Labor Party, in contrast, seems to have accepted the change in a desperate bid to reassert its control on the economy and halt the disastrous rise in inflation.

Theophanous (1980) describes the events, particularly the demise of the socialists in senior cabinet portfolios, which eventually culminated in the dismissal of the Labor Party. He argues that the removal of Jim Cairns, the Treasurer, Clyde Cameron, the Minister for Labor, and Rex Connor, the Minister for Minerals and Energy, was more than conventional practice to reprimand ministers guilty of incompetence or malfeasance. Indeed he contrasts Whitlam's actions to those of Fraser, who, in the face of more serious ministerial scandals when the Liberals were in power, supported his ministers (Theophanous 1980, p. 370). He argues that Whitlam, having decided to abandon his program of reform in favour of massive support for capital, removed these socialist ministers as a symbolic gesture as much as for any other reason. However, he goes on to say:

> In the end, Whitlam's strategy backfired. The government's sudden changes in economic policy—symbolized by the removal of ministers—had come to be represented as sheer incompetence in steering the economy. Labor had first carried out measures which had changed the relation between capital and labour in favour of workers. Within a year, they had completely reversed this and were focusing on the importance of sustaining and increasing the profitability of capital. The result was a 'rationality crisis' in the state. The government was changing policy in its attempts to come to grips with the contradictions within the economy, but was not effectively explaining the reasons for its changes to the people. The Labor government was thus increasingly represented as in disarray and as pursuing irrational policies in economy.
>
> (Theophanous 1980, p. 323)

The result for Labor has already been noted, and in Theophanous's view, the two gestures made by Labor to capital, viz. the removal of key socialists from positions of power and the tough Hayden budget of 1975, were of no help to them, and the party was dismissed from government.

Once in office, however, the Liberal Party was equally impotent to halt the recession. On the contrary, as the statistics indicate, things grew worse. Consequently, the explanations they gave for the causes of the crisis before they assumed government are different to those given after the event.

Before taking office in November 1975 the Liberal Party, as is common in politics, had a simple view of what caused the recession, i.e. it was the opponents, the Labor Party. On one hand, it was argued, Labor had run too large budget deficits, thus causing inflation, ruining business confidence and creating unemployment. On the other hand, they had encouraged workers to seek too large increases in wages, and this consequently produced the 'real wage overhang'. A scathing commentary on this theory says:

> the economics profession has now so degenerated that the major debate of 1978 concerned the 'real wage overhang'. The Fraser Government, taking up the Labor Government's banality that 'one man's pay rise is another man's job', argued to the Arbitration Commission that wages had risen faster than productivity since 1973 and as a result labour was pricing itself out of the market. Thus the anachronistic Say's Law, laid to rest temporarily by both Marxists and Keynesians, was revived. One economist attributed 150,000 of the unemployed to this 'imbalance'. Another felt it might be rectified by abolishing award rates for those under 21 years of age and invented the term 'union voluntary employment'.
>
> (Abbey & Catley 1980, p. 207)

Windschuttle (1979, p. 23) observes that the figures used in support of the 'real wage overhang' theory did not include most people employed in the government sector, and once taken into account this altered the picture to the extent where it had almost disappeared by mid-1978.

However, having taken office and facing a situation of continuing and also expanding unemployment, the Fraser government offered other explanations as its strategies to curb the recession and increase employment failed, the most notable of which was that the recession was due to international economic forces beyond their control (Abbey & Catley 1980, p. 198). The government sought to overcome the recession with a number of deflationary strategies, reflected in their slogans which 'shifted from an investment-led recovery in 1976, to a consumer-led recovery in 1977 (for election purposes) to an international economy-led recovery in 1978' (Abbey & Catley 1980, p. 198).

The main consequence of their strategies, however, was to increase unemployment. This was not simply a consequential side effect of their strategies, but an intended part of the strategy (Windschuttle 1979, p. 24). This was based on the conventional view that inflation, the consequence of 'real wage overhang' must be reduced in order to restore profits. Following economic orthodoxy, it was also argued that this must be accompanied by a corresponding unemployment factor before the restoration of the profit:wages ratio and the restoration of realistic inflation levels would bring economic recovery and full employment. In the meantime, workers would have to suffer the burden of unemployment as a deliberate policy.

> Australian big business, no matter what it had to concede to foreign capital's greater competitive strength and dominance of the high-profit areas of economic activity, nevertheless had a significant part to play in the promotion of unemployment, both as fact and government policy.
>
> (Abbey & Catley 1980, p. 203)

Inflation did not fall, recovery was not heralded in, and unemployment continued to grow.

> In September 1978 the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Tony Street, formally confirmed the extent and complexity of Australia's unemployment crisis—and by implication, admitted the inadequacy, even the irrelevance of the government's policies for economic recovery.
>
> The strategy for economic recovery enunciated in the tough 1978–79 budget lay in tatters, since it was based on the presumption that recovery, renewed economic growth, a gradual restructuring of industry and an expansion of employment opportunities would all flow from a victory over inflation.
>
> (Robinson 1978, p. 84)

As with Whitlam, the Fraser government's strategy backfired, but given the way this government had seized office, and its hyperbole claiming expertise as economic managers, it was placed in a very awkward position. It had been hoist with its own petard, right into a rationality crisis, so that even the pro-business journal, the *Bulletin* (17 July 1979) was capable of running a rather critical article, entitled 'Fraser at mid-term: Popularity low, credibility lower', by Allan Reid. While agreeing that external factors, such as the upward movement in oil prices which was beyond the control of the Australian government, would adversely affect the economy, it went on to point out that,

> when Gough Whitlam, as Prime Minister, sought to use the same excuse to explain away his government's economic shortcomings, Fraser, as Opposition leader, was derisive. He can hardly complain if his opponents, following the example of the pre-1975 Fraser, are similarly derisive now.
>
> (*Bulletin*, 17 July 1979, p. 20)

and goes on to add, with an implicitly rather more critical tone,

> Probably Fraser's largest achievement has been to abate the inflationary spiral. In the middle of his present parliamentary term, there is relatively little else on which he can look back with gratification, though now he has been Prime Minister for four years.
>
> (*Bulletin*, 17 July 1979, p. 20)

But, as shown (Table 1), even the rate of inflation was to begin to rise again, while unemployment (Table 3) was to accelerate. Thus it was that, in Habermas's terms (1975, p. 61 ff.), the government, because of enduring economic crisis, adopted 'contradictory steering imperatives' which caused it to 'fumble' into rationality deficits, causing its actions to 'become more and more muddled'. This was particularly true in the government's handling of youth unemployment.

While it is true that overall unemployment in Australia was by 1978 and 1979 the worst it had been since the 1930s, for young people in

Australia, particularly the 15–19-year-old group, it was catastrophic. There was a huge upsurge in unemployment for this group, beginning in 1975 (Table 5), and the youngest-aged school leavers had proportionately the highest incidence of unemployment (see, for example, the situation for 1979 in Table 6).

Table 5: Unemployment rates by age, Australia, 1964 to 1979

		Unemployment rates (%)			
		15–19 years	20–24 years	25 years and over	All ages
May	1964	3.4	1.7	1.0	1.4
	1965	2.8	1.5	0.9	1.2
	1966	3.0	1.3	1.0	1.4
	1967	3.8	1.6	1.1	1.6
	1968	3.7	2.2	1.0	1.6
	1969	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.4
	1970	3.0	1.9	1.0	1.3
	1971	3.3	2.0	1.1	1.5
	1972	4.6	3.0	1.4	2.0
	1973	4.7	2.4	1.2	1.8
	1974	4.2	2.4	1.1	1.6
	1975	10.1	5.6	2.5	3.9
	1976	12.1	5.4	2.5	4.1
	1977	15.2	6.9	3.0	5.1
	1978	16.0	8.5	4.1	6.2
	1979	17.0	9.3	3.7	6.2

Source: Karmel (1979, p. 10).

Table 6: Unemployment rates by age, Australia, August 1979

Age	Unemployment rate (%)
15	27.2
16	26.3
17	18.8
18	14.3
19	12.7
20	10.4
21	9.6
22	8.9
23	6.6
24	5.1

Source: Karmel (1979, p. 11)

The reaction of the government was, to say the least, confused and contradictory. Besides continuing with a number of 'band-aid' programs initiated under Labor (e.g. the Community Support Scheme for Unemployed Youth, the National Employment and Training Scheme) and introducing its own Education Program for Unemployed Youth, it also adopted a rather primitive stance against unemployed young people. Employing much of the rhetoric of the 'dole-bludger' myth they proclaimed that young people were often unemployed by choice rather than necessity, an attack in which they gained wide support from the media. (The involvement of both government and media in promoting this view of unemployed youth is best described in Windschuttle (1979, p. 155 ff).)

Taking up Habermas's point that authorities have limited information and planning capacity and co-ordination so that they become dependent upon information from their clients, while at the same time being unable to preserve sufficient distance from them necessary for making independent decisions (1976, p. 62), it is not surprising to find close similarities between the government view and that of the media. Contradictions in one are reflected in the other. Thus we find in the *Bulletin*, in a column headlined 'The real story on unemployment' (*Bulletin*, 6 November 1979), youth unemployment is treated simply as a phenomenon resulting from the application of economic principles, viz. 'Where there are not enough workers it is because wages being offered are too low, and, conversely, where there are too many workers relative to jobs it is a clear sign of over-high wages' (*Bulletin*, 6 November 1979, p. 20).

Additionally, the bulk of the article is devoted to two arguments. One is to suggest that talk about a much larger pool of 'hidden unemployed' is not only inaccurate but is also part of a 'propagandistic myth'. The other is an argument that most youth on the dole are not genuinely seeking work, a view supported in the following column of that issue of the journal in which there is reported an interview with the then Employment Minister, Ian Viner, headlined 'Keen kids deserve a chance' (*Bulletin*, 6 November 1979, p. 27). Again, this column presents the view that youth unemployment is high due to economic factors, but also that there are labour shortages in certain areas, and therefore concludes that there are 'undercurrents of over-selectivity' on the part of job seekers. Thus we find youth unemployment being acknowledged, but mainly in terms of personal deficiency and not as a structural economic fact. As time proceeded, however, even the *Bulletin* began reluctantly to acknowledge the growing manifestation of youth unemployment by printing a brief column about life on the dole that presented a glimpse of the frustration and destructive bitterness of young people in that situation (*Bulletin*, 8 January 1980, p. 22). Even this, however, bears evidence of being a token gesture, for, rather facetiously, it featured the so-called 'Salami Sisters', a pair of young women, Kathy Lette and Gabrielle Carey, apparently writing from their own experiences but in a style which tended to trivialise the issues.

Legitimation crisis in government, motivation crisis in education

It was noted earlier that Habermas believed it possible for economic crisis and rationality crisis to extend into two identity crises, viz. legitimation and motivation crises. The first occurs where the legitimation system fails to provide requisite levels of motivation, and the latter where the socio-cultural system fails to provide the requisite levels of 'action-motivating meaning' (1976, p. 49). Events leading up to, and during that period of the Transition Education Program suggest the presence of these two 'crisis tendencies' in Australia, following on the continued economic crisis and the apparent rationality crisis in government. The evidence for this is to be found in the experience of youth in Australia at that time.

There appears to have been great reluctance to admit that there was a massive youth unemployment problem, both on the part of government and sections of the media. Thus we find that, shortly after the announcement of the Transition from School to Work Policy (which, although, officially acknowledging the existence of youth unemployment as a problem, nevertheless implied that the solution lay in improving skills and attitudes in youth rather than having to provide jobs), the *Bulletin* also still steadfastly attacked the view that the real source of unemployment was lack of jobs, replying to Labor Party MP Mick Young's assertion of this, by saying, 'He is simply wrong in saying that the problem is sheer lack of work. Labour shortages exist side by side with unemployment' (Peter Samuel, *Bulletin*, 11 December 1979, p. 22). However, the evidence to the contrary is overwhelming.

The view that the major upsurge in youth unemployment evident by 1975 is merely an indication of the reluctance of youth to accept certain conditions and types of labour, or even that it is to be understood as a collapse in the level of employment due simply to economic malfunction, has been challenged by Gregory & Stricker (1981), who see the problem to be more that of an increase in labour supply.

> Before 1974 employment and labour supply tended to move together. Thus between August 1966 and August 1968 the employment of teenagers fell by 33,600 and 33,700 teenagers *left* the labour force, so that teenage unemployment fell by 100 persons. All of the employment loss was transferred to a reduction in labour supply. Between August 1974 and August 1976, during the depths of recession, teenage employment fell by 18,700 and 12,800 teenagers *entered* the labour force, so that teenage unemployment increased by 61,500 persons. The employment decline during the recession was less than that of the 1966–68 period, and it is clear that the behaviour of labour supply needs to be the centrepiece of an analysis of the very large increase in teenage unemployment.
>
> (Gregory & Stricker 1981, pp. 1.5, 1.8)

The problem of youth unemployment becomes even more complex by adding two further considerations to the picture put forward by Sweet (1982). These are: firstly, his analysis of youth unemployment measured as a proportion of the whole population of the unemployed; and secondly,

the manifestation of youth participation in the workforce. With regard to the first, Sweet makes the point that teenagers have always been a significant proportion of the unemployed, and, moreover, that even in this period of recession, there has been an insignificant proportionate rise in the teenage unemployed. He says:

> In May 1964 when the total unemployment rate was 1.4%, teenagers constituted 35% of the unemployed. In May 1979, when the total unemployment rate had more than quadrupled to 6.2%, teenagers constituted 33.4% of the unemployed.
>
> Between May 1974 and May 1975, the period in which our post-war record of low unemployment was broken and total unemployment more than doubled from 1.6% to 3.9% of the workforce, teenagers' share of total unemployment scarcely changed. It rose by only .3% from 30.0% to 30.3%.
>
> (Sweet 1982, p. 9)

Thus his argument is that although there were a lot more unemployed teenagers in 1975, they were only numerically greater and not greater in terms of a proportion of the unemployed. He uses this argument to emphasise the serious nature of the unemployment problem for adult members of the workforce. There is another important factor in this, however, to which I will return shortly.

Sweet's second point is that there has been gradual decline in the participation rate of teenagers in the workforce. He provides evidence (1982, p. 82) to show that between 1966–71 there was a reduction of 14.5 per cent of employed teenagers in the workforce, while in 1971–76 there was a reduction of 1.5 per cent. Thus he argues that for the period 1966–71 there was a significant change in the workforce structure, during which fewer teenagers entered the workforce, but that in the period 1966–71 the change had slowed down a considerable degree. Two questions arise from this: firstly, for the period 1966–71 where have all the teenagers gone? Secondly, if the drop in teenage job losses has significantly reduced for the period 1971–76 where are the teenagers employed? Sweet answers the first question by saying,

> These trends suggest a rational correspondence between enrolments in the secondary education system and the teenage labour market.
>
> The overall decline in full-time job opportunities is reflected in an overall increase in retention rates. (This of course helps to explain why a 14.5% reduction in the number of teenagers' jobs between 1966 and 1971 did not lead to massive unemployment. Teenagers responded to the reduced number of jobs by staying on at school.)
>
> (Sweet 1982, p. 12)

If the number of teenage unemployed did not match the loss in teenage jobs in the period 1966–71, this was because the secondary education system absorbed the excess. However, with regard to the second question regarding the period 1971–76 it is useful to combine Sweet's analysis with that of Gregory & Stricker above. At the time when Sweet demonstrates that the loss of teenage jobs was reduced, Gregory & Stricker give evidence to show a huge increase in teenage labour supply, which they see as a cause of high teenage unemployment. It seems likely, therefore, if both analyses are correct, that what has happened is that the absorption of teenagers into further years of secondary education in the period

1966–71 has obscured the loss of teenage jobs by 'hiding' those who would otherwise have been unemployed within the secondary schools. The period 1971–76 is more difficult to speculate upon. It seems highly likely that Gregory & Stricker's evidence of increased teenage labour supply indicates that secondary education had reached a saturation level in its capacity to absorb surplus youth. The problem, however, is to explain why, if there has been a reduction in the loss of teenage jobs, this has not been reflected in an increase in the proportion of teenage unemployed relative to the whole unemployed population in response to the massive upsurge in numbers indicated by Gregory & Stricker.

Fortunately, that is not a question which this monograph sets out to answer. However, it might be in order to speculate about this briefly. Two things need explaining: one is the reduction in the rate by which teenage jobs have disappeared; and the other is the relative consistency in the proportions of teenage and adult unemployment in the face of a massive influx of unemployed teenagers. The first might be explained as resulting from a restructuring of the workforce with the expansion of part-time positions which are replacing full-time positions. Sweet (1982) distinguishes between the full-time and part-time labour markets. He points out that in addition to the fact that the part-time positions are largely filled by school-aged students, it is the full-time labour market that the unemployed are trying to penetrate. The second might be explained, as Sweet suggests, by our realisation that the problem of adult unemployment is much more severe than we might realise, and that this realisation is observed by the dramatic numbers of teenage unemployed, which has always been a feature of Australian society. Thus he says:

> It is true that teenagers are hit harder by unemployment than are adults, but this has always been the case. This reflects the way in which labour markets discriminate against those with few skills, little training and limited experience. Included in this category are not only youth but also migrants, aboriginals and many women.
>
> The view that our main problem is youth unemployment rather than unemployment is pernicious as well as misleading because it averts attention from unemployment as the central problem and directs it towards youth. Thus explanations and solutions are sought not where they properly belong—in the failure of our economic and political systems to provide jobs for those who want them—but in youth and in the education system.
>
> (Sweet 1982, p. 9)

Whether or not this provides an adequate explanation for the question remains to be seen. However, Sweet's words are pertinent, since it was because there was such focus on youth unemployment that the Transition from School to Work Policy was conceived.

The high incidence of general unemployment is sufficient to create legitimation and motivation crises in society, but where there is an emotive abundance of youth unemployment, there are even greater tendencies towards these crises. How does legitimation crisis arise? Habermas says:

> The public realm ... set up for effective legitimation, has above all the function of directing attention to topical areas—that is, of pushing *other* themes, problems and arguments below the threshold of attention and, thereby, of withholding them from opinion-formation.
>
> (Habermas 1975, p. 70)

Legitimation crisis arises therefore when the political-administrative system is unable to divert attention away from evidence of economic and rationality crisis. Hence, in the Australian context, if unemployment could be kept at acceptable proportions, or failing this could be contained within socially powerless sections of society, or perhaps 'hidden' within other institutions such as the education system, then legitimation crisis could be averted. Alternatively, if either of these were not possible, then economic crisis could be attributed to the ineptitude of previous governments, which as we have seen, is precisely what happened. However, with the growth of youth unemployment to the extent that the vast majority of households in Australia had the experience of unemployment among its members or else knew someone who was unemployed, attention could not be diverted from the problem.

Not being able to divert attention from the problem of unemployment the government, particularly in view of its claims to office, was faced with a legitimation crisis. The response to this, both on the part of government and the media, was to try to divert the responsibility for this elsewhere, so that in much the same way as economic crisis was attributed to 'the real wage overhang', youth unemployment was now attributed to the 'failure' of the education system.

This revealed itself in a series of combined attacks against teachers and schools by sections of the media. These suggested that high youth unemployment was fundamentally the cause of the state education system's failure to adequately prepare school leavers for entry into the workforce. The *Bulletin*, for example carried articles like 'A wasteland where there should be knowledge' (8 September 1979), and 'Why teachers aren't what they used to be' (25 December 1979), assuring their affluent business-community audience that the private education system, substantially occupied by their own children, was much superior. The main features of this attack have been detailed by Windschuttle (1979). In addition, much of the attack was quite spurious (see Foley 1981) and based on circular validation between press and politicians (Teese 1981). In this latter process, statements by politicians attacking state education as deficient would be reproduced in the press, by which time mere assertions would be reported as factual statements. Subsequently these statements, now accorded the status of facts by publication in the press, were reproduced as hard evidence by the same government parliamentarians who had initially generated the viewpoints (Teese 1981, p. 113).

Although I would not argue that the state education system is without blemish, these attacks can only be interpreted as a conscious attempt to re-legitimise government actions by attributing manifest evidence of failure, perceived in youth unemployment, to the failure of education. Thus, long-standing issues in Australian education, viz. the comparison between the private and state education systems and the so-called standards debate, provided a ready-made context, replete with ideological assertions, from which to provide shots useful in the scapegoating of

education. To some extent, of course there was prima facie evidence that the non-government system was superior to that of the state system (for a comprehensive discussion see Gilmour & Lansbury 1978). Statistics showed quite clearly that more students stayed on at school to the final Higher School Certificate year in non-government schools than in state schools, and moreover that their success rate at HSC was higher (*Australian Students and Their Schools* 1979). Furthermore the probability of their obtaining employment or in proceeding to tertiary education was greater than for state school students (Jones 1982). However, in addition to the factors giving bias to such figures (such as the de facto expulsion of 'failing' students from non-government schools and their replacement by 'successful' students from the state system), and notwithstanding research indicating the close relationship between success on these factors and socio-economic status, from Kohn & Schooler (1969) through to Connell et al. (1982), the very awareness of this was an essential element in creating a motivation crisis among students, particularly working-class students, in the state secondary schools. Knowledge that one is unlikely to obtain work even though one stays on to the completion of HSC, is a strong disincentive to treat education seriously.

Consequently, as a result of the state-administrative system seeking to overcome legitimation crisis by diverting attention away from government and towards the education system, the practice of scapegoating served mainly to generate motivation crisis among young people. Though the arguments might be spurious and circular, nevertheless they touched a responsive nerve in Australian society, and many accepted the view that high youth unemployment was due to deficiences in the state education system. Consequently, there was renewed concern about the content and pedagogy of schools as parents worried about their offsprings' job opportunities and career pathways in the face of shrinking vacancies.

Thus education was being squeezed from above and from below. Above, from the state-administrative system where allegations were made attributing much of the cause of unemployment to the school system; below, from parents who were exerting pressure in an expression of anxiety for their children. As Apple puts it:

> Industrialists and state bureaucrats wish to make schools efficient, to enable them to meet the ideological and 'manpower' requirements of the economy. The tax problems generated by the economic crisis contribute a good deal to the attempts of the same people to make education more efficient. At the same time, because of a crisis in legitimacy there is pressure from 'below', from many of the parents of students from racial, sexual, class, and interest groups to make schools responsive to the often competing needs that each of these groups have identified.
>
> (Apple 1982, p. 119)

Into this context of crisis in the economy, rationality crisis in politics, legitimation crisis in government, and motivation crisis in education, came the Transition Education Program.

The Transition from School to Work Policy

On 22 November 1979 Senator Carrick, the then Liberal government Minister for Education, made two ministerial statements to the Senate. The first was a statement indicating the government's response to the Williams Report (Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training 1979). The inquiry was set up by the Fraser government in September 1976, and the committee's report was tabled in parliament by the Prime Minister on the 22 March 1979, exactly eight months before Senator Carrick's statement.

The second statement followed immediately on the first, and was the joint ministerial statement on behalf of himself and the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, Mr Viner. This statement announced the government's comprehensive policy for transition from school to work. It was no accident that the two statements were made together, for the policy announced in the second follows on from that flowing from the first. Indeed, close affinity between the Transition from School to Work Policy and the Williams Report is not merely by implication, for contained in the statement on the Williams Report is the first indication to parliament that there was to be a Transition from School to Work Policy. In that statement the Senator said:

> The Government has decided that the following policy objectives will guide its responses to the Williams report: Firstly, qualitative improvement of the TAFE sector; secondly, strengthening the teaching of basic skills in schools; thirdly, facilitating the transition of young people from school to work including the development of a comprehensive policy for youth in transition; fourthly, improving the quality and availability of labour market information; fifthly, improving skills training arrangements; sixthly, strengthening and concentrating research in universities; and seventhly, continuing monitoring and adjustments of the education system.
>
> (*Senate Hansard*, 22 November 1979, pp. 2784-5)

History reveals that more attention was devoted to some of these objectives than others. Nevertheless, it is clear that the intentions of the government in announcing its transition education policy are to be understood in the thrust of the Williams Report.

Commentators, quite correctly, have indicated that the Williams Report takes a conservative view of education and is essentially a manpower planning document which encourages the concept of education in those terms, so that it is concerned with the preparation of youth for participation in the workforce according to industry's requirements. Thus it is a document which supports the interests of capital (Young 1981; Freeland & Sharp 1981). Commissioned by the Fraser government, it contrasts sharply with the Karmel Report (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission 1973), commissioned by the previous Whitlam government. The contrast between these two reports has been summed up as follows:

> The Karmel Report is overtly and self-consciously egalitarian. The Williams Report is covertly elitist . . . There can be no greater contrast between the value orientations of the two reports than that which is summed up in the Williams Report's emphasis on preparation of students for work by educating them in work related attitudes and the Karmel Committee's statement that schools should be places . . . 'where the influence of the market place do not dictate the price placed upon individual talents . . .'
>
> The Karmel Committee's emphasis on education for more equal participation, for increased political participation, for cultural diversity, and for a less hierarchical society is in stark contrast to the Williams Report's emphasis on manpower supply and fiscal control.
>
> (Young 1981, pp. 9–10)

Freeland & Sharp (1981) are highly critical of the Williams Report, believing it to endorse meritocratic ideology while at the same time providing this with some legitimacy by enmeshing it within the rhetoric of liberalism. They see it as an attack on democratic educational ideology and practice, an attack grounded in economic theory. They say:

> Keynesian economics is rejected and there is a reversion to classical political economy with an invocation of Adam Smith, and to neo-classical marginal productivity theory . . . Marginal productivity theory underlies the Report's concern for the production function of education and the allocative and cost effectiveness of educational expenditure. Education at all levels should be monitored to ensure the maximum output, in terms of human capital, and to minimise wastage. Throughout the Report there is an invocation of the market forces' capacity to efficiently allocate available labour power and to indicate the most appropriate distribution of educational opportunities. Hence the Report's concern for more effective means of labour power planning and the Committee's flirtation with the idea of educational vouchers and accountability.
>
> (Freeland & Sharp 1981, pp. 59, 60)

In this view, therefore, the Williams Report concurs with the prevailing economic orthodoxy of the time, which, as we have seen earlier, represents a concerted transfer of social resources (in a word, wealth) from workers and to capital in the belief that this would restore profits and consequently revive the economy, thus benefiting everybody. In addition to this, however, it provides fresh legitimation for government policy in education, affording particular support to the view that the education system needs to be more closely aligned to the requirements of industry, on ideological grounds equating the education process with the supply of labour. In support of this view Freeland and Sharp also say:

> Having engaged in a prior orchestration of the shifts in the ideological terrain on which educational issues are discussed both by 'experts' and lay people, the media applauded the Report as a sensible, moderate response to changing conditions and as worthy of support even if at times it was not hard nosed enough in recommending specific rationalisations of tertiary institutions. Over time, moreover, those aspects of the Report which question the prevailing assumption that education is a key cause of youth unemployment have been downplayed while others (increased emphasis on the basics) continue to be stressed. The media's coverage of the Report and the schooling/youth unemployment issue in general has provided ideological legitimacy for those key elements of state educational policy which were

> developed well before the Report was published. The prominence given to Fraser's persistent public statements blaming the school system for youth unemployment has to be understood within this context.
>
> (Freeland & Sharp 1981, p. 76)

Thus when the emergence of the Transition from School to Work Policy is seen in the context of the Williams Report the implications are that the policy had at least two clear, if unstated, objectives: one, to align education more closely with the needs of industry and the economic and political strategies of government; two, to supply renewed legitimation for the state-administrative system's steering performances for the economic system.

A further point requires elaboration concerning the announcement of the Transition Education Program. When revealing its new policy to the nation it was claimed by the government that

> The developments which the Commonwealth proposed were consistent with what had been worked out at the meeting of the Australian Education Council in Perth last month. The State, Northern Territory, and Commonwealth Education Ministers who constituted the Council had endorsed the need for a comprehensive policy on transition from school to work.
>
> (*Commonwealth Record*, 19–25 November 1979, p. 1783)

This statement sits uneasily alongside later developments in the program. One was a dispute between the states and the Commonwealth, which grew to the extent that the states refused to match the Commonwealth funds, which was required on a dollar-for-dollar basis under the terms of the program, which suggests that if endorsement was given by the state Ministers for Education at the Australian Education Council meeting in October, then it was to a program which was not fully worked out. Reasons for this dispute were:

> the States' dissatisfaction with the Commonwealth's guidelines, the lack of a Commonwealth commitment to continue the programme beyond the initial five years and the Commonwealth's refusal (at that time) to pay an allowance to TAFE participants in the programme. During the Federal election campaign the Government committed itself to paying participants the equivalent of the dole plus $6 a week travel allowance.
>
> (Freeland & Sharp 1981, p. 73)

There was also some evidence to suggest that the policy was not as well thought out as the statement in the *Commonwealth Record* might suggest. One senior administrator from the Commonwealth Department of Education remarked over dinner, at one of the many conferences spawned by the Transition Education Program, that the government had decided on the program with such dramatic speed that the senior staff were gathered to design the program with little knowledge of what it was intended that it should do. It was the same person who also said that the government had apparently decided to run the program with just 'one man and a dog' (Kemmis et al. 1983, p. 102). By this he meant that the government had sidestepped the established government agencies in appointing an administrative body and contained the program within the

Commonwealth Department of Education where it was allocated limited resources of personnel. Commenting on this, Kemmis et al. say:

> there were two kinds of reasons that the Commonwealth may have considered in deciding to establish the Program outside the quangos: (1) it was to be an interdepartmental initiative and therefore would be under the control of one of the responsible departments, of which Education was the most likely candidate, and (2) there was some antipathy to the relevant education quangos at the time, and growing uncertainty about their future, so the Department seemed the preferable base.
>
> (Kemmis et al. 1983, p. 103)

On balance, I believe the second proposition to be by far the most likely reason.

Finally, there was some public scepticism about the conception and effectiveness of the proposed program. For example, the *Age*, in an editorial opinion entitled, 'Grey areas in education policy', said of the announced program:

> In all this the assistance of the States has been assumed. Whether they will in fact be willing to chip in on a dollar-for-dollar basis each year for the next five years remains to be seen. This is one grey area in Senator Carrick's policy. Another is that of executive responsibility. Who will have the final say over the kind of programmes run: the Commonwealth or the State? What happens if the State wants to spend its youth training money in another way? Again, as critics of the Government plan have said, what steps will be taken to ensure that the most disadvantaged young people will be guaranteed access to the programme? Will the courses offered simply enlarge the choices of those who would have stayed at school longer, or found work for themselves anyway? And what happens if a young person refuses to join a training course, or walks out during it?
>
> No one can argue against the notion that people should be educated to their full potential. What is worrying about the Government's school-to-work transition policy is that while it will make school leavers better qualified, they still have no guarantee of work at the other end. The Government's scheme would not in itself create jobs. It would stave off the problem of finding work for a year—long enough to make an impact on the official unemployment figures, and convince the public (in an election year) that youth unemployment was on the way down. Better training opportunities for young people are welcome, but the basic problem would remain. What Australia needs is not a better-educated brand of unemployed, but work for those who cannot find it.
>
> (*Age*, 27 November 1979, p. 11)

Conclusion

To gain an impression of how effective the Transition Education Program has been in introducing curriculum reform into the education system, you should consult the publications produced by the Transition Education Case Study Project. These include twenty-four case studies of individual Transition Education Projects in secondary schools and TAFE colleges that were regarded as 'exemplary', i.e. they were considered to be successful in their own terms and useful examples to other teachers wishing to introduce new initiatives into their teaching. Also among the publications is a volume of three discussion papers and a report that documents the history of the

program and discusses the implications arising from it. These publications have been distributed to all schools and TAFE colleges in Victoria. They should be available in the libraries of these institutions, but, if not, are available from the Victorian Participation and Equity Program (PEP) Administration.

This monograph focuses on the events leading up to the Transition Education Program, and argues that it was the result of a number of crises originating from the economic and political circumstances of the time. It further suggests that this is indicative of the fact that what happens in schools has to do with more than straightforward educational issues; that schools and colleges are indeed inextricably tied to the web of economic and political affairs of society. This argument is taken further in some selected readings that follow, and attention should be given to these.

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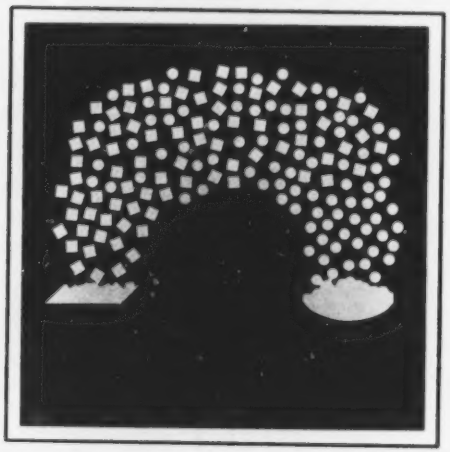
Readings



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The Karmel and Williams Reports as policy theories

R. E. Young

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While the Karmel and Williams Reports differ profoundly in terms of the core of values they embody, they are quite similar methodologically. Both reports exhibit systematic reticences when it comes to the relationship between the policies they espouse and the total social process in Australian society.

It should be noted, though, that the following discussion is a discussion of the Reports, not the persons who wrote them. When it is argued that the Williams Report, for instance, conceals its values, it must be seen as an argument about the qualities of a document not necessarily about the knowledge or perceptions of the members of the committee responsible for it, although readers will no doubt draw their own conclusions about the latter question if they wish. However, this is not a very great limitation on our discussion, because it appears to be primarily as reports, and as written recommendations to governments, that these documents make their impact. It is primarily on the bases of their reasoning or the lack of it that we ought to judge them as policy theory.

Another limitation on the following discussion is that of brevity. It is intended only that the discussion be illustrative. In addition, it is necessary to *infer* the values of the Karmel and Williams reports since the Williams Report does not discuss its own values at all, and the Karmel Report, while being quite explicit about its core values, is silent about a range of related value issues and offers no justification for or analysis of the value positions adopted.

The Karmel committee begins its report with an open statement of values. Each section of the report begins with a reiteration of these, e.g. the committee 'places a high value' on diversity (1973: para 2.10, p. 11), 'the committee values . . .' (1973: para 2.7, p. 11). In contrast, the Williams Committee appears to adopt a strategy of value denial. Values, in the form of educational goals or objectives are mentioned in a number of places in the report but their connection with any of the specific recommendations, or indeed, with the argumentation which supports these recommendations is virtually impossible to trace (1979: Vol. 1, 127–7, 739–44, 746, 794–5, 798–9, 801–810, also 100–105, 717–179, 785–6). The direct relationship between goals and recommendations of the Karmel Report is absent.

In any case, the Williams Report's view of educational objectives appears to have been derived not from its own inquiries but from a government postscript to its terms of reference (Vol.: 739–741), in which the government further directed the committee to

> have regard to the Government objectives including widening educational opportunity, regarding educational and occupational choice, developing quality and excellence in education and encouraging community participation in education and training matters.
>
> (Vol. 1: 739)

The government's rather vague prescriptions are, however, not only 'regarded' but accepted: "The Government's objectives...are not novel and there was little sign in the submissions of a desire to set new objectives" (Vol. 1: 741). Those submissions, referred to elsewhere in the report, which directly challenge the validity of some of the listed objectives, are virtually ignored. A comparison of the objectives of education, as discussed in the Williams Report (passim) and as defined in the Karmel Report reveals how tendentiously the issue of values is treated in the Williams Report (cf: Karmel, 1973: Ch. 2). Moreover, the only recommendations which appear to be directly connected with the objectives is the recommendation that there be public discussion of the relative weighting of them and the means of implementing them (1979: vol. 1, 127). In contrast, the Karmel Report makes each of its recommendations flow quite directly from the value-orientation it sets out in the beginning of the report —its peripheral values are generally in concord with its core values. In contrast, the bulk of the recommendations of the Williams Report appear to flow from its economic and fiscal objectives rather than from the objectives of education which it lists. Moreover, the objectives, as listed, are all expressed as objectives for the individual—*individual* development, individual vocational achievement and the preparation of the individual for social relationships and citizenship—but the recommendations of the report are clearly aimed at meeting the *collective* goals of manpower supply and fiscal control. To say the least, the connections, if any, between the objectives of education and the recommendations of the report are indirect. The degree to which value orientations are involved in the report's recommendations is thereby obscured. The 'needs' of the labour market are partly a matter of political decision, the role of technology and the understanding of technology for which the curriculum should aim are also partly matters of value. The degree to which questions of value are involved in the areas considered by the report is nowhere systematically discussed, instead, *the economy* is treated as an objective, nature-like external system, to the needs of which education must conform.

The Karmel Report appears to show an awareness of the nature of the group whose interests will be served by its recommendations: the poor, the black, women, isolated groups, immigrants and the educationally disadvantaged generally. It is a little coy about private schooling but its priorities are clear. It appears to be aware, although it is not stated in so many words, that its recommendations run counter to the interests of affluent groups who send their children to wealthy private schools (1973: paras 2.12–2.14, and 2.17, p. 13). While only a fragmentary justification for its values is given, it is at least aware of the relation between the policy-values it espouses and those likely to be espoused by other groups in the community. The Williams Report, in contrast, hardly mentions private schooling. Indeed, the whole question of educational disadvantage as related to socio-economic status (SES) is simply brushed aside with the remark that since *general participation rates* in the higher levels of education are rising it is time we turned our attention to specific disadvantaged

groups such as blacks and the disabled. But rises in general particiption rates, at HSC for instance, do not necessarily mean there has been any diminution in the educational disadvantaged associated with family economic circumstances. Here it is possible to argue that the core values of the report may be connected with an empirically and logically inadequate argument. In the early 1960's achievement of HSC was an almost automatic ticket of entry into University, there were few quotas then. Today, the HSC *mark*, which is SES related, is much more important, and other social and linguistic factors are still important during the course of higher education, yet the Williams Report uncritically accepts, as an adequate summary of the question, Lancaster-Jones' view that it is at the level of attempting or not attempting the matriculation examination that the most important effects of socio-economic difference are felt (1979: Vol. 1, 493).

The Karmel Report is overtly and self-consciously egalitarian. The Williams Report is covertly elitist (see also Bates, 1981). The Karmel Report embraces the devolution and decentralization of authority and decision making. It opts for "less centralized control over schools" (para 2.4, p. 10). The thrust of the Williams Report, with its recommendations for more testing and monitoring of school performances and more centralized planning, appears, if anything, to be headed in the opposite direction. There can be no greater contrast between the value orientations of the two reports than that which is summed up in the Williams Report's emphasis on preparation of students for work by educating them in work related attitudes and the Karmel Committee's statement that schools should be places... "where the influences of the market place do not dictate the price placed upon individual talents" (para 2.22, p. 14).

The point is not that Williams is wrong and Karmel right, but that the Karmel Report was explicit about its values, and showed that it was aware of the interests served by its recommendations. The Williams Report does not show such an awareness, and tends to obscure its values beneath an objectivist style and a rhetoric of economic necessity.

The Karmel Committee's emphasis on education for more equal participation, for increased political participation, for cultural diversity, and for a less hierarchical society is in stark contrast to the Williams Report's emphasis on manpower supply and fiscal control. Although the terms of reference of the reports are very different, it was possible for both Committees to begin their deliberations with some vision of the kind of society Australia should attempt to create in the future. The Karmel Committee alone availed itself of this opportunity. Questions of financial aid or efficiency can be resolved only in the light of a set of criteria which embody values. Whatever one may think of its values, the methodological superiority of the Karmel Report in respect of explicit value awareness is quite clear. Perhaps, though, it was because of the Report's values that it was rated only one sentence in the Williams Report (1979: Vol. 1, 484).

However, both reports fail to examine crucial connections between education and society. The social theory components of each policy theory are very one-sided, although in quite opposite ways. The Karmel Report concerns itself with mainly political recommendations—with the cultural and political goals of education. The Williams Report concerns itself with mainly the 'needs' of the economy and the fiscal problems of Government. It could be said that the Karmel Report virtually ignores the value problems which arise from economic structures, and the Williams Report, while ignoring political questions, presents the economic role of education in the light of the adaptation of schooling to an economic process perceived as objective, nature-like and beyond political control. This one-sidedness presents a clear opportunity for any more complete attempt at policy theorizing to produce an account which totalizes either or both of Karmel and Williams.

The absence of connections to the political and cultural realm in the Williams Report prevents even the possibility of social critique emerging. The only critique which can emerge from Williams is a critique of teachers and schools. The Karmel report contains the seeds of critique, but they are prevented from germinating. In all charity it is appropriate to say that it was politic of the Karmel Committee to leave the readers to fill in for themselves the wider social implication of their egalitarian, multicultural and anti-authoritarian values.

Enough has been said already to indicate that any relationship between the two policy theories and any possibility of realisation of their values is likely to be a result of accident rather than method. But other methodological weaknesses also exist, which further underline the political and rhetorical nature of the policy methodology adopted by the Committees and its ultimate impotence from the point of view of rational policy making.

Neither policy theory draws in any detail the connection between education policy and the range of other areas of state policy which is generally acknowledged to be vitally connected with education (except at the level of a certain amount of rhetoric about employment in the Williams Report). Neither policy theory examines the process of social definition whereby the problems addressed come to be identified as such (although the Karmel Report makes some effort in this direction in respect of the equality of opportunity debate). The process of problem definition might reveal the groups whose interests are threatened by the problem state of affairs.

The emergence *as problematic* of certain conditions in schooling, such as inequality of opportunity, lack of definition of product, or an absence of 'cost-accounting' and evaluation, all of which have, in fact, been present for a very long time, requires explanation prior to the development of policy to deal with them. In the absence of such explanation, it seems likely that there will be no clear identification of the groups whose interests are served or threatened by the existing state of affairs and by the new state of affairs envisaged by policy. It is difficult to imagine the development of an effective strategy for changes which run counter to some interests of dominant, or even well-entrenched groups in society without such identification.

Neither report examines the question of the *compatibility* of the various goals they seem to direct their recommendations towards, or canvas in their discussions, although there is, in the Karmel Report, some acknowledgement of the fact that its recommendations were unlikely to achieve greater equality of educational outcomes (e.g. 1973: 22, 23) and there exists at least a mention of this problem in the Williams Report (1979: 126).

Finally, and most damagingly, neither report endorses a clear vision for the general direction of Australian life, or places its discussion of education within the context of some account of broader Australian social values (although again, the Karmel Report does contain some discussion of social trends and desirable features of a future Australian society). Perhaps, though, this is asking too much, since it would require, at the least, a Manning Clark to do it. Perhaps all that can be properly expected in this regard would be a sign that there are connections, that there are issues which arise at this most general of levels: the issue of Australia's place in the world, of its relationship with the poorer nations, being among those which might properly be considered at this stage.

The shifts in political and economic circumstances which have given rise to a heightening of the sense of the problematic in respect of some set of conditions and the felt need for government to address such problems through public policy formation, are the unacknowledged background of policy, without which the self-understanding of policy making appears to be almost blind. When

policy fails to reflect on its own historical circumstances, it fails to notice, or fails to admit, that the problems whose salience has risen above some threshold of public awareness in the field of education are often defined by the same set of meanings and needs which have arisen simultaneously in a number of areas of the nation's development. Equality, 'a greater share of the cake', or related values rose to prominence generally in a number of similar societies at the same period of time. The reflection of such values in education was not unrelated to their simultaneous reflection in industrial relations, and in respect of the redistributive role of the state in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The Karmel Report, coming at the end of the long economic boom, bore the earmarks of the social values which became popular at the time throughout much of the Western capitalist world. The close resemblance between the values of the Coleman Report (USA: 1966) the Plowden Report (UK: 1967) and Karmel (1973) is no accident; all were produced under similar economic conditions. Habermas' (1975) analysis of the legitimation crisis of the modern state details the way in which state agencies attempted to deal with problems of legitimation under boom conditions by ever increasing intervention in areas of public concern (frequently in issues concerning the 'quality of life', rather than in more fundamental areas of product distribution and sharing of wealth). In times of boom conditions the pressure points of capitalist political economics are at the cultural periphery since rapid growth permits the resolution of questions of basic economic justice to be indefinitely delayed by a series of concessions, largely in terms of wage rises.

The Williams Report had a very different emphasis. It was a report for recessionary times. It too has its clones in Reagan's America and Thatcher's Britain. Its concerns were for easing the fiscal burden of the state and for the disciplining of the labour force, as well as for increased technical control over and accountability of education systems. Its concerns in the area of education were precise reflections of more general concerns. Its policy recommendations for education were faithful images of similar recommendations by other committees in the areas of health and welfare. No doubt the committee was well aware of this, but the connections between general policy and the report's recommendations are not much reflected upon in the report itself. The real aims of the report remain unspoken.

The prevailing political and economic circumstances are also connected with the methodological differences of the two reports. The more relativistic and self-consciously evaluative approach of the Karmel Report reflected the general ideological movement of the economic boom, for, as Habermas has shown (1975) the paradox of capitalism's most successful movements is that they engender an increased questioning of its characteristic modes of thought. In times of recession, however, modern capitalism, which is a technologically oriented capitalism, due to the increasingly strong nexus between technological development and productivity, is likely to throw up pressures which direct ideological forces back to more formalist and objectivist conceptions of knowledge – that is, back to orthodoxy and away from the diversity and heterodoxy so favoured by the Karmel Committee.

The foregoing account of the methodology and values of the Karmel and Williams Reports in the light of questions of consistency and coherence and the clear tendency to mimic each other shown by other contemporary committees operating under similar political-economic circumstances in other Western capitalist societies, indicate that the use of such Committees of Inquiry is not likely to generate open and exploratory discourse. Indeed, it indicates that such Inquiries are really more like political moves than 'inquiries', each based on an unstated policy theory, one step removed from that which appears in their

reports. A corollary of this conclusion is that their lack of explicitness about values and their consequent failure to record their justification for the policy values expressed, and other related failures in their discussion of value questions, is not simply a product of methodological naivety but of the mode of operation hitherto adopted by expert committees of inquiry in societies like ours.

Nevertheless, even if policy theories were to seriously address problems of consistency and coherence, certain crucial policy problems would remain. But in addressing these we would at last be beginning to consider the real policy issues – issues concerning the kind of society we want to create and the likely effectiveness of different methods of getting there. It is to these issues that we now turn.

PROGRESSIVE AND DEGENERATING POLICY PROGRAMMES

The process of immanent critique, as developed by Horkheimer, is not limited to 'internal criticism' (1974: 171). Rather, the intention of such critique is to pass from an identification of internal contradiction and incoherence to an analysis which relates such inconsistencies and reticences to the historical and social context in which they emerged. By beginning with the conceptual apparatus of the viewpoint we seek to understand and by systematically pursuing its own logic we can avoid the charge that we are merely actualizing another and alien set of values in the course of critique. If we can show a viewpoint fails *by its own standards* we cannot be accused of judgement based on views biased against it. Further, though, if we can show that the conceptual reticences and logical contradictions, the incompleteness and inconsistency of a theory, are systematically related to social conditions and to the circumstances of the production of the theory, we can point to the way in which the theory functions in its historical environment as ideology. We can identify at least some of the closed-off possibilities, the suppressed heuristic, to call upon Lakatosian language, which are inherent in the existing social order. While this is certainly not enough to overcome the limits of the present, it is a necessary condition for a rational attitude towards its possibilities.

An analysis of policy theories along the lines sketched in the first part of the present article procides the beginnings of an immanent critique. But the process of critique, even immanent critique is largely limited to the *negative*. No amount of systematization of critique can tell us which of the possibilities of the present ought to be the project of praxis. When critique has done its work, and policy theories, such as those underlying the Karmel and Williams Reports, lie at our feet in ruins, it may still be appropriate to ask: Well, what *do* we do, then? Ultimately there must still be a choice of some kind which is not derived from theory but imposed on it. If things could be other than they are, if counterfactual conditionals have any real usefulness, if the notion of choice stands as even a fuzzy sign for a human reality, we must address the question of human values and their justification.

The nature of policy theories is that they have a core of values to the realisation of which they are committed. The adoption of values raises the question of the justification of one set of core values rather than others – the question of choosing between policies. While immanent critique may make the origins of some values clear, and while some values may be reduced to statements about the state of the valuer's digestion or brain-chemistry, etc., the practical circumstances of policy choice in 1981 mean that we are still faced with choices about which we have no historical or political-economic explanation, and for which we have not yet reduced to statements about the brain states (or childhood) of the valuers. How can we bring rationality to our aid in the choices we must make?

At this point it may be possible to enlist the aid of a Lakatosian account of policy theory choice. Following up a suggestion by Kevin Harris (1979: 48) it may be possible to extend the Lakatosian criteria for making judgements about scientific theory to judgements about policy theory. This will not provide 'instant' rationality, but it may provide a slight advance which permits the systematization of a part of the historical analysis of immanent critique.

In Lakatos' view of scientific theories, a theory is often modified and replaced by a series of successor theories in a process of theoretical change which produces successive theories, each of which is a modification or extension of an earlier theory (1970). Modifications are introduced into theories to account for new empirical data which the old version of the theory did not encompass, or new logical problems revealed in the older version of the theory. During this process the central tenets of the theory may be preserved and changes are more likely to occur in a 'protective belt' of auxiliary assumptions and in less important parts of the story. This series of theories or heuristic research programme may be replaced by another programme with a different set of central tenets if, over a period of time, it is seen to be producing diminishing returns. The criteria by means of which Lakatos suggests the progressiveness of a theory series should be judged are when successive theories:

i) explain all of the facts explained by predecessors
ii) explain the facts which were anomalous in predecessors (and perhaps explain why such anomalies occurred)
iii) successfully predict new phenomena not covered by previous theories and
iv) are not falsified by any facts known at the time.

Two very general criteria run beneath these four, an empirical criterion and a logical criterion. They are not applied in an absolute way, but in an historically sensitive sense. Moreover, Lakatos warns against regarding these tests as decisive. Even if validly applied, tests of whether or not a series of theories (a research programme) is progressive or not are not absolute. If a programme is shown to be degenerating it is merely *more likely* that it does not lead to the progress of knowledge, it is far from a certainty.

The purpose of theories is to explain empirical reality (facts). Explaining is judged by empirical evidence and by logical connections between other parts of an explanation and those which can be more directly related to facts. Theories are persevered with or abandoned on a middle to long term view of how well they are *improving* explanation. Hindsight is the basis of judgement here rather than programmatic hope, although hope sometimes vindicates itself when the fortunes of a theory are reversed by an unexpected empirical inheritance.

Now in extending this style of thinking to policy theories several modifications may be necessary, but before discussing then it might be pertinent to ask what the criteria of judgement might be in respect of policy theories. In respect of policy theories it is not the explanatory power of the central core of *concepts and propositions* which is at issue. Values do not describe or permit technical action upon reality, they are *realized* by courses of action, and they help us to choose between possible courses of action. Given its core of values, a policy theory might be said to be progressive if, at lower levels of the theory (goal-states, strategy), it demonstrated, *over time*, that its successive modifications and developments in the process of application, led to an increasing degree of *realisation* of the core values of the policy. If it did not, it could be argued that either the modifications the policy theory underwent in the

series of theories were leading in the wrong direction, or, that the core of values of the theory was in some way unrealizable or inappropriate to the historical circumstancces and the human condition.

Under some circumstances, however, the fact that a research programme is degenerating is not sufficient reason to abandon it. One of these circumstances occurs when there is no likely rival theory which could provide a substitute. Where such a rival is available it is possible to apply a version of the Lakatosian criteria to the choice between rival programmes, each with a different set of core concepts. Here one goes for either the progressive programme if one is degenerating and the other progressing or the *more* progressive of two rival progressive programmes. The latter decision involves judgements about relatively greater empirical richness or logical consistency.

In the case of policy theories, the choice between rival programmes may at least bring us close to the question which has been avoided thus far: the question of justification. Ultimately we may have to make a value-choice concerning which core of values we think better.

In the social sciences, and in policy theory, the situations with which we are faced are often too confused for us to make such choices. It is often unclear if any genuine value-difference exists in respect of apparently rival policy theories. It is often said, and there is a germ of truth in it, that at bottom everyone has the same values: human happiness, justice, love, etc. In any case, the judgements we might make, either at the level of immanent critique or its Lakatosian extension to cover degrees of value realization are exceedingly complex ones, which themselves have their own politics. We cannot simply *apply* the Lakatosian criteria in any mechanical way. We cannot yet use facts to contradict values in any consistent way. Indeed, the very question of what constitutes a fact is partly a *theoretical* question and, therefore, partly a question of the values associated with particular heuristic programmes. Different theories interrogate concrete human experience in different ways. Even the business of applying the Lakatosian tests is fraught with difficulties since a very different set of central theoretical ideas might define another research programme's 'facts' as fictions. This is, of course, precisely the situation which obtains in the social sciences. But it is also true that practitioners operating on the basis of the *same* research programme may disagree about the validity of particular experiments, tests of theory, etc. In the short run, at least, values cannot be either reduced, or eradicated from the process. And, of course, jealousies, career interests, racial, political, sexist, and cultural biases abound in science as elsewhere. Just the same, it is of little use inveighing against the difficulties of the task, since we must perforce choose.

Accordingly, it may be appropriate to formulate the criteria for judging the progressiveness of a policy programme in the following terms:

A policy programme is progressive if

1) the successive policy theories achieve the same sorts of successful core value realizations as previous theories, and,
2) it avoids unwanted effects of previous theories (also, perhaps, explaining why they occurred), and
3) it leads to new ways of realizing core values and to ways of realizing them in a greater degree, and
4) it does not introduce new outcomes which are contrary to the core values.

A formulation of this kind has at least the virtue of shifting the focus of some of the debate to an historical analysis of a broad set of core values in successive attempts at their realization. Perhaps something is to be learned from such a shift of focus. I suspect that an historical analysis of the policy programmes underlying the Karmel and Williams Reports would reveal that both are degenerating policy programmes.

The liberal-democratic ideal of equality of opportunity appears to have failed to find an effective strategy for implementation, despite its relatively long history. It has consistently underestimated the obstacles to the implementation of its ideals. The Karmel Report's policy, in retrospect, did not represent a progressive shift within this programme. Similarly, the efficiency movement in education has been with us since at least the 19th century, but it too has not displayed the characteristics of a progressive policy theory series in recent decades. The basic ideas for strategy in the Williams Report are old and tired. They can be found largely in the same form in American literature of the 1920's and 1930's. Perhaps it is time for a change to a new policy programme. Critical theory of one sort or another is in the process of developing such a programme and thus may be worthy of more detailed attention than it has hitherto received from the majority of educators.

CONCLUSION

Critical Theory and Policy

It must remain the task of another worker to address in detail the question of the progressiveness or otherwise of the policy programmes of the Karmel and Williams Reports. That task would require a detailed historical analysis. For the present, it is to the purpose to examine some methodological features of critical theory in respect of policy theory, in which critical theory might go beyond the view of theory choice outlined. The Habermas version of critical theory provides two further grounds for critique, and for theory choice: epistemological and critical.

Habermas identified forms of knowledge with basic existential interests. Policy theory might be judged, in part, in terms of the consistency between its core values and the interests (or values) underlying the form of knowledge in which its social theory and strategy components are couched. Thus, the Karmel Report's employment of a scientistic or instrumental understanding of educational research may have been in basic contradiction with its policy values. From the point of view of Habermas' social analysis, scientism is expressive of interests opposed to the Karmel Report's desire to decentralize authority and encourage the opposite of standardization—diversity of both curriculum and pedagogy. A scientistic view of educational research is also likely to be allied to a technicist view of educational practice, but the view of educational practice implied by the Karmel Report, was, if anything, humanistic not technicist. The value analysis of epistemology thus speaks to further development of the process of immanent critique, and to possible contradictions between values and the model of knowledge and efficacious action-in-the-world embodied in a policy theory. On a more positive note, Habermas' epistemology could point to the potential of hermeneutic knowledge in the realization of Karmel's values.

The third form of knowledge which Habermas identified is critical knowledge itself. This is the product of reasoning beings' reflection on themselves *and* their reasoning against the background of their historical circumstances. The present discussion, it is hoped, is an example of this form of reasoning. The very existence of this form of reasoning presupposes, as does the existence of the other two, a fundamental existential value-orientation or interest. (A corollary of this is that there *is no disinterested* knowledge). The interest of critical reason is the interest of reasoning itself—or, to put it another way, human persons' self-understanding in the fullness of their historical circumstances. Hindsight is an important part of this understanding. Structural analysis of present systems is another. But the future is the region in which our incompleteness resides. We cannot know it, we can only do it.

Those who choose to value rationality above all other values *with which it*

is not already consistent choose to judge all rival policy programmes in terms of their likely contribution towards the increase of human self-understanding. All tests of policy programmes, and indeed, all critique of them, immanent or not, will also be judged in this way. Reflexively, the criterion for judging the process of judging policy is whether the process of judgement was itself open to rational possibilities. In a similar view, the process of inquiry during which policy is formed can be interrogated in terms of its rationality. (It has been suggested above that most Government appointed committees of inquiry do not fare well in respect of this latter criterion.)

The beginnings of an account of the linguistic and procedural features of rational judgement-forming discourse has been developed by Habermas. Sufficient to say here that the rational openness of communication in such situations may be judged in terms of the potential for all participants to make any and every *rational move*. Historically, the process of theory formation may be judged in terms of the contribution to theory formation of distorted structures of communication and the consequent embodiment, in theory, of interests. One of the functions of an immanent critique with critical intent is to uncover the connections between theories and interests. Such a theory of discourse is contiguous to the theory of pedagogy and curriculum and provides the basis of a systematic connection of the theory of policy methodology with the theory of education itself.

Marxist theory, in its critical rather than its scientistic version, offers a substantive theory of capitalist society (including state capitalism) which provides a further very general orientation to policy theory of which it may properly be asked: Is this very general theory itself progressing or degenerating? Whatever one's answer to that question, it may nonetheless be true that such a theory offers, at the least, a basis for policy which suffers less from the faults capable of exposure by immanent critique than do the policy theory fragments embodied in the Karmel and Williams Reports. Habermas' particular version of Marxist theory (e.g. 1970; 1975) may not be everyone's cup of tea (e.g. Therborn, 1971; Sensat, 1979) but it provides an account which has particularly interesting implications for educational policy. Very briefly, it permits the connection of education to the general process of the historical development of human rationality, and it implicates education, in its present form, in the malaise of capitalist society. The task of critical theory for students of educational phenomena would appear to be that of developing critical educational policy theory which can stand scrutiny as rigorous as that coming from Marxist commentators, with which the conservative and liberal democratic theories have had to contend.

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2

The Australian government and the schools

B. Bessant & A. D. Spaull

Source: B. Bessant & A. D. Spaull, *Politics of Schooling*, Pitman, Carlton, Vic., 1976, pp. 97–141.

The federal aid to schools campaigns

Since 1964 the Australian government has provided direct financial assistance to Australian schools, a practice which has continued, and been extended, since the change of government on 2 December 1972. However, this significant change in the funding of schools has not been an easy political process. The fact that they have at last come into effect, and have also been accepted by most sections of the community, is a tribute to the inspiration and endeavour of Australian teachers and parents' organisations, as well as other community groups active in schooling. Their efforts to secure some form of federal assistance over the past thirty years is one of the great 'success stories' of Australian schooling.

Constitutionally, responsibility for Australian schools rests with the state governments. This was reinforced at the Federal Conventions in the 1890s when the question of control of education was not discussed. Throughout the next fifty years, the Commonwealth's interest in and assistance to schools was minimal. Indirectly it has influenced school funding through the Grants Commission, the Loan Council and the Premiers' Conference. Under the Grants Commission, established in 1933, special grants were made to the weaker financial states to provide approximately uniform economic development in Australia. These grants were made under section 96 of the Constitution, viz 'Parliament may grant assistance to any State on such terms as parliament thinks fit'. The Loan Council, established in 1928, is a unique Australian monetary institution which aims to rationalise the annual public borrowing of all the Australian governments. Its influence on the school systems is that the Prime Minister and Premiers decide the level of loan allocations to public works, including school buildings. The third method of indirect Commonwealth financial assistance is through general revenue grants. These have been made since 1941 following the Uniform Taxation Agreement, when the Australian government was given the power to tax incomes during the war. It has maintained and defended this control since 1945. These

grants are in the form of tax reimbursements to the states and are made at the Premiers' Conferences which are held at least annually.

The Australian government's direct assistance to state schools, as distinct from its substantial contribution to schooling in its territories, has again come under section 96 of the Constitution. This has been through the making of specific purpose grants. The first of these were made for roads in the 1920s followed by a volume of small grants to many areas during the depression. Since 1945 these grants have been extensive and substantial and have included roads, developmental programs and schools. With schooling, the specific purpose grants are best seen at work in the Australian government's assistance to the universities. These were first made in 1951, but were substantially developed after the establishment of the Australian Universities Commission in 1959. Grants have been made for capital and recurrent expenditures in universities, teaching hospitals and later in colleges of technology. The federal government justified its intervention in university finances because its post-war reconstruction training scheme had drawn heavily on university resources. McCulloch has also studied this question of motives and concludes that, apart from R G Menzies' personal belief in a strong university system, the decision rests on the concept of manpower.[1] This involvement in the universities has meant that grants of nearly $12 million in 1955–57 have increased to over $240 million in the 1970–72 triennium.

A potential area of direct federal assistance to schools is through section 51 ss xxiii of the Constitution, viz 'The provision of maternity allowances, widows' pensions, child endowments, unemployment, pharmaceutical, sickness and hospital benefits, dental services (but not so as to authorize any form of civil conscription), benefits to students and family allowances'. This has never been used and the federal assistance to school pupils has been made under section 96.

Australian teachers were the first group to become interested in the question of federal assistance to schools during the Great War. By 1921 the forerunner of the Australian Teachers' Federation approached the Prime Minister, W M Hughes, to discuss financial assistance. But Hughes refused even to receive a deputation.[2] Both the VTU and the NSWTF developed policies in the 1920s calling for federal government assistance to education. There were occasional reaffirmations of this belief over the next decade as the depression forced curtailment of school expenditure. In 1935 the VTU went as far as to insist that Australian schools 'shall be controlled by federal authority.'[3] This remained VTU policy until 1944. Opponents raised objections to federal control. They warned of the problems of uniform standards in curriculum, increased bureaucratisation and the loss of influence by the state teachers' organisations. On the other hand, the NSWTF's demands in 1938 and 1939 were tempered to the notion of an Australian government financial subsidy. During the war, the ATF conferences were bedevilled with this question of control. The VTU persisted with its platform of federal control. In 1943 it called for an Australian Education Commission to finance and administer schools. This was opposed by many delegates because they feared a regimented national school system. A compromise was reached which outlined the areas of federal control, and although opposing unified control, called for a federal Board of Education to act as a co-ordinator in education, and provide adequate federal funds. The latter role

remained the parents' and teachers' policy throughout the next thirty years.

In 1938 a federal minister, W M Hughes, told the NSW Teachers' Federation that the federal government would only consider financial responsibility if public opinion supported it. He felt that it was 'the duty of all teachers' organisations to stimulate the growth of this body of opinion, till it becomes an insistent demand ready to express itself at the ballot box'.[4] The NSW teachers were already thinking along these lines and invited the Parents and Citizens' Federation to join in a campaign for a 'new deal' for Australian children. The highlight of the campaign was a state convention of community groups in June 1938. Some 650 delegates considered the immediate and future needs of Australian schools and called for federal government finance to state education. This was to be the first of several mass campaigns for federal support for schools in Australia over the next thirty years. It was also during the 1930s that education reform groups such as Education Reform Associations in Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania were established. Frequently their discussions were devoted to the possible implications of federal involvement in schooling.

However, it was the Second World War which released the first major discussion on the question of federal aid. The war, and more specifically Australia's mobilisation, was used by both teachers and parents as an argument for federal assistance to schools. Teachers' organisations emphasised support for physical education and technical education facilities. The ATF conferences also accepted the need for federal assistance to schools to help the war effort. In January 1940, for example, it was claimed that the war effort for Europe had emphasised the deficiencies of the Australian school systems.[5] The 1941 ATF conference witnessed a lengthy debate on a proposed request for a £10 million grant to schools. One group of delegates felt that the pursuit of ATF policy on federal aid would endanger the priorities for war. Other delegates felt that the danger would release a flow of national funds, and that finance was not a problem.[6]

As the danger passed, parents' and teachers' organisations began to press for federal financial support to schools as part of post-war reconstruction programs. In 1944, the VTU wrote to the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, J B Chifley, suggesting that as many servicemen would need retraining in vocational skills, capital expenditure for technical schools should be financed from federal funds.[7] The 1944 ATF conference also informed the federal government that the Commonwealth Reconstruction Committee should consider financing the physical facilities of primary and secondary schools, technical and agricultural colleges and manual centres. It also requested the establishment of an Australian Education Commission 'to investigate reforms in education and to organise plans for educational reconstruction'.[8]

In this period teachers and parents were joined by other supporters of federal aid. The war produced a detailed analysis of the relationships between war and education, and education for 'the new social order' in peacetime. Many academic observers of the Australian school system were disturbed by the deterioration of the state systems and

by the public complacency about schools in the inter-war years. This is perhaps best exemplified by K S Cunningham's review of education. The war, he felt, had 'shattered' this complacency and 'the need for educational development if not educational reform is admitted on every hand'.[9] For Grenfell Price, writing in 1943, the federal government's decision on uniform taxation was significant for the future of Australian education. He now felt that the federal government 'probably assumed the chief responsibility for future educational advice. But supreme financial power brings with it, however, supreme responsibility and this responsibility the federal government must face.'[10] S R Dickinson, the former headmaster of Haileybury College, Melbourne, concluded that federal support for education would be one of the primary instruments for successful post-war reconstruction.[11] Also of importance was the adoption by the 1943 ACTU congress of the NSWTF's education policy. This included a plank on federal assistance to schools. Moreover, the encouraging sign was the interest in schooling being taken by individual unions.

These demands from various bodies were codified and transmitted by Australian teachers' organisations and had some influence on government policy in the mid-1940s. The ALP formed the federal government from 1941 to 1949. As a national party it was still not overtly interested in educational issues. For instance, at its 1943 federal conference the major discussion on social issues was the nationalisation of health services. As government, however, Labor was becoming increasingly aware of the importance of schooling. At first it was content to subsidise the universities, especially in the sciences and technologies, as it was troubled by the constitutional arrangements for primary and secondary schooling.[12] Dedman, as the Minister for War Organisation of Industry, questioned whether the Commonwealth was free to intrude into the state education ... 'other than to some university students'. Dr Evatt, the attorney-general, had not referred to education in a 1942 draft on proposed amendments to the Constitution; three months later, he appeared to be having second thoughts on this subject. Evatt sent a message to the ATF Conference which included his thoughts on schooling and post-war reconstruction. He stressed that reconstruction must consider the role of the school systems. He envisaged some support for adult education, youth training, students and the teaching profession. He placed greater stress on the implications of family financial allowances and hoped that these would enable the family 'to become a unit for developing the aptitudes and educational potentialities of its child members'.[13]

In 1943–44, Evatt began to draw up the proposed areas of state powers to be transferred to the federal government. Education was excluded, largely because the state education ministers, meeting through the Australian Education Council, feared that it would lead to federal control of the schools. This annoyed teachers' and parents' groups in most states and sharp protest notes were sent to Evatt urging a reconsideration.

Later in the war period, the ATF, accompanied by the NSWTF, put a case to the Prime Minister, John Curtin, for substantial federal

financial assistance to education.[14] This was rejected with apologies for constitutional limitations. Several months earlier he had given the Federation some hope that education was being discussed in the cabinet.[15] This eventuated as the discussion behind the establishment of the Commonwealth Office of Education. The VTU had also hoped that the Victorian government would support a move by the Tasmanian Premier, Robert Cosgrove, for a combined states' deputation to the federal treasurer to plead for emergency funds for schools. The Minister of Education, T T Hollway, replied that this would be discussed at the Premiers' Conference, but no further action was taken.[16]

Federal government policy on this question did not alter with the defeat of the Labor government in 1949. R G Menzies had stated in his 1949 joint policy speech that education was a state responsibility, but due to the taxation system the Australian government would have 'to assist financially if education is to progress and to be justly available'. He listed three areas where grants could be made: university, technical and adult education.[17] When Menzies had last been Prime Minister in 1940 he told the ATF that the states jealously guarded education. He referred to the division between matters of national and local importance, as seen by the constitutional fathers in 1901, but this neat division, he said, 'is becoming more and more false every year'.[18]

In Opposition, the United Australia party had quietly argued for federal finance for schooling in the 1943 elections. Menzies claimed that in secondary, technical, university and adult education, Australia was 'as backward as any in the civilized world'.[19] In 1945 he openly promised federal aid.[20] Five months after Menzies became Prime Minister he informed the NSWTF that it was impossible for the federal government to help education unless asked to do so by the Premiers.[21] In sum, federal governments, both Labor and non-Labor, had neatly sidestepped the issue of financial aid to the school systems by using constitutional arguments. Both parties had hinted at possible areas of involvement but, with the exception of technical schools, did not contemplate support for areas which came under the influence of teachers' organisations'. Thus the various pressure groups for federal aid, having failed to convince directly the federal and state governments and their education departments, were forced to appeal to the Australian people.

The first major campaign was the New Deal for Education movement. The idea had originated independently from the State School Teachers' Union of W.A. and NSWTF in 1946. This was given the blessing of the ATF in January ,947. The strategy of the New Deal campaign was to attract public support for 'radical educational advancement' and particularly for federal aid to schools.[22] The primary aim of the campaign was to involve community groups and opinion leaders in activities for educational advancement. These activities would vary from electoral work to propaganda through the media and the organisation of education conferences. During 1946 the NSW campaign concentrated on press and radio propaganda and electoral work. They also won widespread press publicity, especially in the country. The Labor, Liberal and Communist parties supported the intentions of the New Deal campaign. Moreover, J G McKenzie,

NSW's Director-General for Education, W J McKell, the NSW Premier, Sir Charles Bickerton, chancellor of Sydney University, and R J Boyer, chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, all sent public messages of support. A pamphlet was published, *Their Future — What Does It Mean to You?* which outlined the platform of the campaign. The highlight of the campaign was the New Deal's Easter conference in 1947. It was sponsored by organisations which included teachers, parents, trade unions, students and other community groups. At the conference, 790 organisations were represented by nearly 850 people. Over the two days they agreed on a set of basic principles and needs. These included:

> Education at all stages is the responsibility of the Federal and State governments. Second, education should be developed under the NSW Education Act, i.e. it should be free, universal and secular. Third, that the Federal government should make a specific loan of £100 million to the States for education. Fourth, that the Commonwealth and State governments should formulate a priorities list for education expenditure.

Similar campaigns, although not as grand, were developed in other states. The Victorian campaign, for example, took the form of a publicity movement which attempted to bring before parents and other bodies the need for federal aid. The New Deal for Education group participated in the Melbourne Community Festival and Education Week. It also organised an evening rally jointly sponsored by the VTU, the State School Committees Association and the Mothers' Clubs Federation. A set of resolutions similar to the NSW resolutions were passed by the meeting. In proposing the federal aid resolutions, the VTU president explained the campaign's objectives. 'The New Deal is a war against ignorance ... but all politicians know that there is within this nation a determination that we shall get a New Deal for Education.'[23]

A national conference of the New Deal movement was held in Canberra in 1948. The primary target was to involve community groups in a national conference and also to show them the physical advantages of the Australian government's school system as found in Canberra.[24] Most of the first day of the conference was spent visiting a nursery school, primary schools and Canberra high school. Most delegates were undoubtedly impressed by Canberra's school facilities. The now usual set of resolutions were enthusiastically endorsed and a deputation was organised to meet the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, J J Dedman. A former West Australian teacher, Kim Beazley, MHR (later federal Minister for Education), assisted the discussion with suggested areas of education that could avoid the constitutional problems. Dedman, however, told the delegation that if the problem was one of inadequate funds for capital expenditure, then the organisations should ask their governments to apply to the Loan Council. Despite the activity and the occasional public interest in the New Deal for Education campaign, there were no concessions to education from the federal government.

In NSW the federal aid battle was extended by a wave of campaigns in the 1950s. Between 1950 and 1954 the Teachers' Federation organised the 'In Defence of Education' movement and between 1954 and 1958

the 'Advance of Education' movement. The former was a carry-over from the New Deal for Education group but it concentrated on highlighting the growing educational deficiencies in NSW. The state's Labor government had openly admitted a crisis in education and blamed the federal government for the reduced financial re-imbursements.[25] The citizens' conference in March 1952 was originally a teachers' protest meeting on salaries and conditions, but as the full effect of the 1952 recession hit the state, the NSW Teachers' Federation called a community meeting to protest against the reductions in loan allocations. Over 1110 people attended and passed a series of motions calling for federal assistance to prevent the collapse of the NSW state school system.

Until 1954, the working arrangements of the NSW Teachers' Federation with other community groups for school aid campaigns had been only informal, except with the NSW Labour Council. This changed with the formation in May 1954 of the Advance of Education Council which quickly established the following objectives:

(*a*) Persuading the Federal and State governments to make adequate provision to meet the educational needs of the people.

(*b*) Popularising and organizing support of the people for the Advance of Education as outlined in the resolution carried at the Advance of Education Conference held on Saturday, 8 May 1954.

The NSWTF played the leading role in the Council's formation and development. The Council consisted of the NSW Labour Council, the NSWTF, the NSW Council of Churches, NSW Council for Christian Education, the Federation of Infant and Nursery School Clubs, the Australian Primary Producers' Union, the New Education Fellowship, the Union of Australian Women, and the Parents and Citizens' Association.

Apart from the Advance of Education Council, the NSW Teachers' Federation also used the trade unions to provide moral support for its deputations and submissions. But the NSW Labour Council was not prepared to accept the Federation's request in 1957 for a special ACTU congress to initiate a nation-wide campaign for a more equitable distribution of taxation and loan funds between the federal government and the states.

Despite the Advance of Education Council's enthusiasm, there were signs that its size, its diversified membership and its variety of activities had made it unwieldly. Its failure to make headway in school improvement also lost it the active support of other community organisations. Early in 1957 the NSWTF, the Parents and Citizens' Association and the Federation of Infants and Nursery School Clubs began to discuss the possibility of a joint committee. Until then, the Parents and Citizens' Federation, as distinct from some of its district constituents, would not co-operate in the federal aid campaign because it was regarded as a party-political issue. In 1956 the Infants and Nursery School Clubs also withdrew support because of objections to the Council's organisation at the branch level. By 1957, as the cutbacks to school funding became more obvious, the teachers approached the other two organisations with the approval of the

Advance of Education Council, and the three organisations co-sponsored the Education Conference of 1 June 1957. This was the largest meeting yet held on Australian education and comprised a rally of the 3800 delegates, representing 1500 organisations. The conference presented localised profiles of educational conditions in NSW. It also re-affirmed the major resolutions of the 1954 Advance of Education conference.

From this June conference the co-sponsors merged to form the NSW Parent-Teacher Education Council. This body hoped that by replacing the Advance of Education Council it would 'result in a greater strengthening and consolidation of the movement for educational progress'.[26] The Parent-Teacher Education Council became the spearhead of the federal aid campaign and the education reform movements in NSW. In Victoria the VTU was not as eager to establish formal alliances with other community pressure groups and not until 1959 did it join with Victorian parents and citizens to form a Parent-Teacher Education Council. This and similar bodies in other states were all modelled on NSW lines.

The highlight of 1958 was the ATF's two-day conference held in Canberra in May which originated from a NSWTF motion at the 1958 ATF meeting. It involved other community groups and twenty-eight national organisations were represented as well as fifty-two state organisations. Each state's own survey of school problems was presented. The conference re-affirmed the need for the federal government 'to take the initiative in overcoming this urgent problem by making available large scale financial assistance to the States for education purposes'. During the conference ALP federal members held a discussion with representatives of major organisations. On 22 May 1958, the Prime Minister received a small deputation from the conference. They were treated to the constitutional position of education and Menzies repeated that the states had never approached the government for a special grant to education. The conference, in the light of this statement, decided to ask the federal government to conduct a survey of educational conditions.

From the small Canberra conference (120 delegates) the notion of a mass national education conference developed. The first such conference was in May 1960 in Sydney and the second in May 1963 in Melbourne. Both were sponsored by the ATF and the Australian Council of School Organisations. At the Sydney conference 3200 delegates representing many organisations attended. Significantly, R J Heffron, the NSW Premier and Minister for Education, and J Bloomfield, Victoria's Education Minister, both spoke on their state's educational difficulties. The meeting called on the premiers 'to make a joint and determined approach' to the federal government at the next Premiers' Conference and Loan Council meeting, 'for substantial and immediate grants to education'.[27] Later in 1960, the teachers' organisations along with other conference groups secured a petition of 241 000 signatures on the need for federal aid to education.

Three years later it was Melbourne's turn when the same sponsors arranged the National Education Congress. This time 4000 delegates (25 per cent from interstate) representing thirty-two federal and state organisations heard messages from the education ministers from

Victoria, Tasmania and NSW, and EG Whitlam of the Labor party and W McMahon, Minister for Labour and National Service, addressed the congress. The only departure in resolutions from the earlier conference was the request that the federal government appoint a finance committee to establish 'ways and means of making immediate substantial grants to State governments for education services'.[28]

What effect did these campaigns have on public opinion? In terms of alliances, the formal alliances such as the Advance of Education Council or the Parent-Teacher Education Councils, and the informal groups such as the many organisations who attended the conferences, gave the federal aid movement a broader base for its operations. To people outside the movement, including the politicians, there was an appearance of widespread unanimity on the importance of federal aid. The NSWTF was instrumental in involving community organisations in the federal aid campaign. Of course, a mass movement for federal aid, structured formally, was not always conducive to effective operations. The replacement of the Advance of Education Council by the smaller but more workable NSW Parent-Teacher Education Council illustrates the problem of a suitable scale of operations.

The special conferences are difficult to assess. Certainly they provided a convenient forum for community groups to appreciate the problems providing schools in the states.[29] Yet in most cases the messages of despair and anger were only transmitted to the converted: teachers and parents with first-hand experience accepted the thesis that there was a school crisis. Other community groups such as the ACTU, the Fellowship of Writers, the women's organisations or white-collar unions supported the large campaigns because they believed their organisations should be associated with school reform. The conferences in the post-war period gave them this opportunity and undoubtedly their delegates found the meetings educative, in terms of understanding the nature and dimensions of the educational and financial problems.

The difficulty is to assess the influence of the campaigns on the world of the uncommitted and the indifferent. One of the major objectives of the campaigns was to cultivate public interest through the press. This was based on the assumption that the press can help mould public opinion; but this still remains an assumption of belief. However, given that it was an objective, what type of a press response did the campaigns receive? First, considering the New Deal for Education campaign in 1948, an overall impression is that it gained little attention except for a high response in the country press. In the newspapers the state conferences were reported as news items.

The 1957–58 campaigns did not fare much better. Both the Sydney *Sun* and *Sydney Morning Herald* agreed that there was a need for federal aid, but the reporting of the June conference was disappointing. By 1958, the Sydney and Melbourne press was losing interest in the campaign and the national petition and the Canberra conference were only briefly reported. The *Sydney Morning Herald* was antagonistic. It wrote:

> Once again a somewhat jaded public is being bombarded with hair-raising information about the tragic and appalling conditions under which teachers work and children are taught in Australian

primary and secondary schools ... It must be regretfully said that their efforts are misdirected because Education is a State's responsibility ... The Canberra conference, however, will quite certainly get nowhere if it confines its attention about the fate of the nation's schools without facing the real hurdle of tangled Commonwealth-State financial arrangements.[30]

Two days later it attempted to discredit the campaign by suggesting that NSW teachers were sympathetic to the ALP. The national conference in Sydney received little attention. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that it had done 'little more than rubber stamp proposals which have been rejected in advance by the Federal government'.[31] The Melbourne congress in 1963 attracted considerable attention locally but was almost ignored by the Sydney press. The *Age*, both before and after the congress, was sympathetic to the federal aid movement. The *Herald* wrote that '1963 may become known as the year of the big push in education in Victoria'.[32]

Overall, the campaigns do not appear to have had much impact on public opinion. Overseas observers such as H C Dent, R Freeman Butts or R W B Jackson did not comment directly on any public campaigns for improved sch ɔling. Indeed, Freeman Butts on his 1954 visit proposed that Australia needed a 'great educational revival and awakening of interest in education ... I miss a widespread feeling of ferment or dissatisfaction or criticism'.[33] Jackson visited Australia in 1960 and stated that at the time he did not know of the 1960 conference and petition, although he acknowledged this in footnotes. He found a general apathy towards school matters. 'Little attention', he wrote, 'is really paid in newspapers, radio, etc., to the basic current issues in education.'[34] But the campaigns' messages reached some areas of the community. In May 1958, for instance, the Victorian Employers' Federation called for a federal government 'white paper' on primary, secondary and technical education.[35] In a different light, the *Review of Australian Education 1955–1962* mentioned the rise of a public interest in schooling.[36]

While the special campaigns and conferences were the most spectacular forms of the federal aid movement, the conventional forms of electoral pressure should not be ignored. The day to day attempts to influence politicians, parliaments and the political parties of the need for federal financial assistance to schools intensified during major elections and fell away to correspondence and deputations in other years. The NSW Teachers' Federation, the ATF and the NSW Parent-Teacher Council displayed the most energy and continuity but elsewhere it was spasmodic. For instance, federal aid committees were not established in the Queensland Teachers' Union or VTU until just before the 1958 elections.

It was the political parties rather than the parliaments who accommodated most of the electoral pressures. The Labor party, out of office after 1949, gave the teachers' organisations a reasonable hearing. Until 1957 education came under the Social Services and Housing Standing Committee; it was not until 1961 that an Education Standing Committee was established. In 1951 Labor established as part of its federal platform 'financial aid for the purpose of assisting all forms of education' and this was extended in 1953 to both private

and state schools, but as a result of the ALP 'split' the policy was withdrawn in 1958. As early as 1954 the federal Labor leader, Dr Evatt, admitted that ALP thinking on schooling was heavily indebted to the NSWTF[37] although his policy speech for that year placed education well down the long list of seventy-eight items. In 1958 Evatt stated that all Australia had become aware of the inadequacy of the schools and promised a committee of inquiry into the needs of primary, secondary and technical education.[38]

In parliament, Labor members occasionally made reference to federal assistance to schools. Gordon Bryant, for instance, a Victorian ex-teacher, devoted his maiden speech to federal assistance and the needs of the schools. In 1960 Bryant summed up the polarisation in parliament on the federal aid question: 'We on this side of the House look at the schools and at the children and opportunities they ought to have. From the other side of the House we have nothing but funds, figures, fantasy and federalism.'[39] Within the ALP the turning point came in 1959 when its federal conference outlined possible areas for federal involvement. An ALP Education Committee apparently gained considerable mileage from an exchange with the NSW Parent-Teacher Education Council.[40] In 1961 a fully-developed educational policy was accepted by the ALP's federal conference and placed before the nation during the 1961 federal elections.[41] It reflected teachers' policies in its emphasis on assistance for physical and technical training and to overcome inadequate physical facilities in schools. Following the 1961 decision, Labor frequently championed the federal aid cause in parliament. Its spokesmen included Reynolds, Johnson, Barnard, Beazley and Bryant — all former school teachers — and Whitlam.

Of the other political parties only the Democratic Labor party and the Communist party had substantial policies on federal assistance to education. Just after the party's formation, the DLP's Education Committee developed an education policy as a major part of the DLP's platform. It accepted the need for federal financial assistance to students attending all schools, grants to private schools, building programs and grants to satisfy current needs aggravated by rapidly expanding migrant communities.[42] The DLP's emphasis on government aid to private schools rendered it useless for the teachers' and parents' groups as both were opponents of state aid in the 1950s. The Communist party supported federal aid to education after 1945. In the 1954 federal elections it claimed that £200 million could be found for schools just by setting aside the federal defence budget.[43] The Communist party, however, was never seen as an important area for electoral work because it did not have any chance of parliamentary representation.

The government parties adhered strictly to Menzies' approach to schooling. During the 1954 elections party candidates in Victoria told the VTU that they were sympathetic to its problems but were bound by the existing constitutional limitations. For instance, P E Joske, the federal member for Balaclava, told the VTU that the Prime Minister expected the premiers to request a special grant. No request had been made and therefore no action could be taken, particularly as the Prime Minister did not wish to interfere in education.[44] In NSW the Parent-Teacher Education Council at least held discussions with

the Liberal party's federal members. The Country party in NSW had indicated to the Teachers' Federation as early as 1945 that it supported federal assistance to technical education, especially when related to defence.[45] Briefly then, both the Liberal party and the Country party at the national level reflected government policy and attitude.

The federal aid campaigns had little impact on federal election strategies until the 1963 elections. This is easily understood in the context of the major issues on which national elections were fought during the period from 1949 to 1963 — economic stability, national security, the credibility of the ALP as an alternative government and the credibility of Dr Evatt as a national leader. The problems of schools had little chance of becoming a major election issue until these matters had been settled and so teachers and parents struggled vainly against the mainstream of electoral thought. For instance, in one survey of the 1958 national elections, the schools were not mentioned in any of the parties' campaigns;[46] yet 1958 witnessed the most concerted public campaign for federal aid to schooling ever seen in Australia to that stage.

Pressure by teachers and parents did have some effect on state governments. Throughout the period from 1945 to 1963, the teachers' organisations often attempted to brief premiers on federal aid questions just before the Premiers' Conferences or the Loan Council meetings. This was generally done by letters followed by telegrams and occasionally by a deputation. A similar approach would be used on the education minister or even the director of education before they left for the Australian Education Council.

In NSW, the McGirr, Cahill and Heffron governments appeared sympathetic to the Federation's request. This was particularly true of R J Heffron, both as Minister for Education and Premier; Cahill apparently referred most school matters directly to Heffron, but the Federation was not always happy with this arrangement. Heffron was anxious to establish some form of federal assistance to NSW schools and took this line publicly such as at the 1957–58 conferences and apparently at the Australian Education Council.

In Victoria, the VTU had been critical of the Dunstan and Hollway governments' unwillingness to seek federal assistance. In 1958, for instance, it wrote to the Minister, John Bloomfield, and to the Director, Alan Ramsay, suggesting that the Australian Education Council should produce a statement on the needs of education. Bloomfield later reported that this and similar proposals had been considered at the meeting, but it could only recommend the proposal to the premiers.[47] Later Bloomfield did speak at the 1960 and 1963 National Education Conferences and argued strongly for support to advanced technical education. This pressure on the state governments occasionally influenced the nature of discussions at Premiers' Conferences. The problems of the schools in the states were continually raised at these conferences, during either discussions on tax reimbursements or pleas for federal assistance. Major debates on these questions occurred at the 1954, 1958, 1961, February 1962 and February 1963 meetings.

Yet it was the education ministers and their administrators who

vigorously pursued the federal aid question at the governmental level. In 1960 the Australian Education Council decided to review the states' educational conditions. Its document, *Some Aspects of Australian Education*, which was accepted by the premiers before their 1961 conference, called for federal financial assistance and a national enquiry into the needs of primary, secondary and technical education. Heffron presented this demand to Menzies but in 1962 Menzies told the premiers that this had been rejected.[48] Menzies later acknowledged the various influences operating on the government when he called for a white paper on education which investigated the general trends in Australian schooling and touched on the federal aid question.[49] It was attacked by the NSWTF[50] and the Labor opposition because it failed to assess the needs of primary, secondary and technical schools and refused to acknowledge the premiers' request for a national enquiry and interim financial assistance to the states.

In February 1963 the premiers, on the advice of their education ministers, again requested a national enquiry into the school systems, but the three non-Labor premiers withdrew their request for special financial assistance.[51] Nevertheless, William McMahon, acting on behalf of the Prime Minister at the Melbourne national conference, hinted that the federal government was in the process of seriously considering avenues to assist Australian schools.[52] And this was more than a brave promise because it is now apparent that the demands and submissions from state governments and education departments as well as from parents and teachers had become part of national thinking. The 'Sputnik revolution', especially as it had influenced US thinking on federal education in 1958 and the concept of 'national need' being serviced by improved secondary school facilities, had passed through the doors of the Commonwealth Office of Education to Menzies' advisers. It had existed before 1963, probably around 1960, but the November 1961 federal election was based on the polemics of economic recession. Between then and the next election in November 1963 Menzies governed the country with a one seat majority and he constantly searched for issues on which he could introduce a snap election. He found them eventually — in mid-1963 — not in federal assistance to schools, not in foreign affairs as such, and not in economic indicators, but in the troubles of the Labor party and its policies.

There is little doubt that the Menzies government agreed with the tone of urgency in the demand for federal aid to the schools. There is also little doubt that it rejected education as a burning election issue on which to carry the country again. What it saw was the Labor party's education policies as a dilemma of state aid principles. The Menzies policy of federal involvement in schooling thus became the means to the end. State aid issues (as well as foreign affairs) would sow division and uncertainty amongst the relatively united Labor party campaign and would, if Menzies outbid the Labor party, buy preferences from the Democratic Labor party.[53]

It is sufficient to claim here that the Liberal-Country party coalition easily out-bid and out-manoeuvered the Labor party. Menzies promised competitive scholarships for secondary and technical schooling, an annual grant of £5 million to the states for building and equipping technical schools, and a £5 million grant to provide for

science laboratories in both public and private schools. The Menzies government was returned and in May 1964 legislation was passed under section 96 of the Constitution which implemented all three promises. At last the federal government had come to the direct financial assistance of the states in respect to schools. It had also, of course, come to the aid of the private secondary schools. Those first grants were token, compared to both the federal government's resources and the urgent needs of the schools, nevertheless the precedent had been established within the existing constitutional arrangements and federal aid to schooling had been introduced, if only by the back door and by the way of political football.

The reaction of teachers and parents to the government's decision varied; overall it was one of disappointment but with some hope. The state aid aspect complicated the issue, but only the NSWTF openly opposed it; the Federation campaigned against state aid and in 1970 it joined the Council for the Defence of Government Schools. One side effect of Menzies' decision was the disbanding of the Parent-Teacher Education Council in NSW. When the Federation of Infant and Nursery Schools decided to sever its connection with the Council because the prime objective of the Council had been partly achieved, the other two constituents decided to dissolve the Council. The ATF reacted cautiously to the federal government's decision. It has still pressed for further federal funds but has not become entangled in the state aid controversy. Its secretary told the 1964 conference that despite the 1963 election promises, the ATF had not made a major breakthrough but

> it had made progress. Education has gained Cabinet rank in the Federal parliament; admittedly in a Cinderella position, but it is there. Gains perhaps small gains, but significant, and it is our duty to do all that we can both as an ATF and as teachers in our State to see that the impetus given to the movement grows and accelerates during the coming years.[54]

The efforts to secure federal aid for primary and secondary schooling was only superficially realised by the 1964 legislation. And a closer study of the policy change may reveal that other groups, notably the private schools (Catholic and non-Catholic) and the DLP, were as influential as state school teachers and parents, if not more so. Certainly the teachers' demands for federal aid had been accepted by the political parties, the state governments and the Menzies government, but only in a general form. Teachers and parents had also displayed the urgent need for federal financial intervention to arrest the states' deficiencies and had suggested possible areas of federal financial assistance without disturbing the existing constitutional arrangements. But they had not suggested any methods of overcoming existing federal state financial relations.

At its best the federal aid movement played an important role in keeping the issue before the community and parliament; at times in the period from 1940 to 1964 the teachers and parents' voices were the only ones reaching governments. Moreover, it was the teachers, and particularly the NSWTF, who deliberately broadened the community axis of the federal aid movement so that it reached the brink of becoming a national issue. But this was the end of the line

for the teachers' influence: the Curtin, Chifley and Menzies governments avoided their demands for federal aid. Finally Menzies responded to their demands but only in token terms. The decision to involve the federal government in non-university education appears to have been made hastily and as much in the interests of electoral realities as in educational interests. It was not made with an eye to the educational realities of the Australian public education. In terms of the teachers' original demands made after 1943, the 1964 decision fell far short of the target. This is still the case in the later period, 1965–70. Furthermore, the introduction of a new element, state aid to non-government schools, distracted the campaign for federal aid. In one stroke of the legislative pen, the government both by-passed the federal aid movement and crippled its momentum with the state aid issue.

A secondary effect of the teachers' federal aid movement was that the school funding problems of the states were highlighted for the state governments. The special campaigns and electoral work, although specifically directed towards changing federal government policy, probably influenced state governments' expenditures. The NSWTF believed in this argument, claiming, for instance, that after the June 1957 conference, 'there was a record allocation for this State from loan funds and consequently many schools are being built. This is a heartening result and provided an inspiration for the bodies that sponsored the Conference.'[55] But a year later it was forced to admit that there would still be serious problems in accommodation and teacher recruitment.[56]

Between 1964 and 1972 there was little or no change in the approach to federal aid for schools by the teachers and parents' groups. Joint alliances during election years continued but were distracted by anti-state aid movements, particularly in NSW. The campaigns were given more funds, especially by the teachers' organisations, and television was adopted more frequently in the place of the mass rallies. The policies themselves hardly varied; it was federal financial assistance rather than control which remained. Yet it was still difficult to make school funding a major issue in national elections. In the 1966 election it suffered, but at the hands of a greater single issue, the Vietnam war. Three years later a new Labor leader, E G Whitlam, made federal aid a prominent issue but he was hampered by state aid problems and the Gorton-Whitlam leadership scenario. The year 1972, however, was the federal aid movement's finest hour. From 1971 onwards, with an ever-increasing public awareness of the problems of the schools, plus the bitterness of state aid receding, the federal aid issue centred on questions of finance and types of administration. The Karmel Committee's enquiry into schools, established immediately after the election of the Labor government, was the culmination of the period 1964–72 as it was the consolidation of a national policy on school systems in the states. It is not to be forgotten, however, that 1963 was the culmination of the struggle to bring the federal government into the schools. This in itself is one of the successful political campaigns in the history of Australian schooling.

Liberal party attitudes

Since 1945 the differences in party attitudes towards schooling which were previously confined to state politics have emerged at the federal level as the Australian government has taken an increasing interest in the school systems and as it has gradually extended its commitment to funding schools. Labor's traditional emphasis on equality of opportunity for all students regardless of economic circumstances has been maintained in federal politics while the Liberals have continued to show sympathy towards the academic and higher levels of schooling, epitomised by the approach of the federal Liberal leader for most of this post-war period, Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. However during the early 1960s a new factor — state aid to non-government schools — profoundly influenced the course of federal involvement in schooling and led to a rethinking of party policies, particularly at the national level.

From the time when he formed the Liberal party in 1943, out of the remnants of the United Australia party, until his retirement in 1966 Menzies completely dominated the national policies of the Liberal party on schooling. It was true that the Liberals showed little interest in schooling and only in very recent years have produced detailed policy statements. Yet those initiatives which were taken in the federal field between 1949 and 1966 were invariably taken by the Prime Minister who was not only head of the department which encompassed many of the educational responsibilities of the Australian government, but he was also one of the few Liberals who took any sustained interest in the schools.

Menzies believed in the efficacy of a liberal education. He saw broadly based academic studies as enriching the mind and ennobling the character, although it was clear to him that only a small section of society was capable of undertaking this form of education. This led him to take a personal interest in the progress of Australian universities which he saw as custodians of this liberal tradition and havens for an academic and cultural elite. At the same time his empathy with the private secondary schools who were to feed the students into these universities was well known. He saw them as part of this liberal, Christian tradition with their roots firmly embedded in the heritage of the great English public schools. This went with a lack of comprehension or experience of the state school systems which characterised Liberal members of parliament, particularly cabinet members. In 1968, 64 per cent of Liberal parliamentarians had attended private non-Catholic secondary schools, 7 per cent Catholic and only 29 per cent government secondary schools.[57]

Except for one lapse in 1945 Menzies consistently maintained that the school systems were the province of the states and that there was no need for direct federal funding. However, consistent with his sympathies but nevertheless quite illogically, the universities were excluded from this argument, and during his period as prime minister they were well favoured with federal grants. Menzies argued that it was improper for the federal government to grant money to the states for specific purposes and not to have control over its expenditure as had been established with the universities. At the same time he believed that his government was indirectly aiding school funding by its general

grants and its assistance on the loan market to the states.

In spite of the obvious sympathy of Liberal members towards the private non-Catholic schools, while in power from 1949 to 1963 the government did little to aid these schools. It was not these schools which were seeking aid in the 1950s: they generally cherished their financial independence although as costs increased during the 1960s they were not reticent in accepting government grants. There had been little point in the Liberal party attempting to attract the Catholic vote which had been traditionally wedded to Labor. Nor were there many Catholic Liberal members of parliament in sharp contrast with the large numbers of Catholic Labor members. In the 1950s Liberal party parliamentarians went along with the Protestant backlash against Catholic agitation for state aid although, when confronted with direct questions on Liberal party state aid policy, Menzies was evasive, claiming that school funding was not his responsibility.

All this changed dramatically with the 1963 federal election campaign. Menzies announced in his policy speech, apparently without prior consultation even with his cabinet colleagues, that the government, if returned, would make £5 million available for the building and equipment facilities for science teaching in all secondary schools.[58] This not only committed the Liberal party to state aid to private schools but also marked the beginning of direct federal government intervention in the financing of secondary schooling.

Menzies' motives could be seen to be entirely political. He knew that the Labor party was in disarray over the question of state aid. After a near debacle in the 1961 federal election when he came within a handful of votes of becoming Leader of the Opposition, he was looking around for support. At the same time many Liberal members depended for their re-election on second preferences from the Democratic Labor party which was giving increasing prominence to the state aid question as the problems of the Catholic schools multiplied. The DLP controlled 9 per cent of the vote over the nation and its preferences deprived the Australian Labor party of at least ten seats in 1958,[59] with a similar pattern in 1961. However Menzies was concerned at a possible decline in the Democratic Labor party vote and a possible drift in preferences to the Labor party, since that party, though divided on direct grants to private schools, was offering attractive increases in scholarships for students in both state and private schools.

The Democratic Labor party leader, George Cole, was fulsome in his praise for Menzies' initiative. He issued a memorandum which had widespread circulation amongst the Catholic hierarchy and laity in which he praised the Liberal party policy as a 'radical advance in the fight for equality in education for children in independent schools'.[60] The overwhelming victory for the government in this election must have been partly attributable to this astute political manoeuvre by the Prime Minister.

Nevertheless it was not simply another example of political expediency over-riding all other considerations. It has been shown how the campaign for federal aid for state schools had been gathering momentum in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The Labor party was committed to meet this demand and Menzies was well aware that any such federal aid would seriously disadvantage the private non-

Catholic schools. It was therefore essential, in view of his known preference for the private schools, that both private and state schools be linked in any federal government involvement in non-tertiary schooling. The foresight that was shown here was demonstrated in grants made to schools in subsequent years culminating in the announcement by the McMahon government in 1971 of emergency capital grants to schools for 1971–73 totalling $29.7 million, of which almost one third was to go to the private school sector.

Another promise made by Menzies in 1963 as part of his package deal for aid to the private schools was to inaugurate a system of Commonwealth secondary scholarships to be awarded to the successful candidates at state-wide competitive examinations at the end of the fourth year of secondary schooling. The scheme was weighted in favour of the private school student: not only did that student receive the full £200 allowance for maintenance, books and fees (the state school student could only claim a proportion of this amount), but the award of the scholarships favoured the private school students out of all proportion to their numbers.[61] It is doubtful whether Menzies ever envisaged these 'scholarships' as fulfilling the traditional function of scholarships, ie to help the academically bright student who may not otherwise have had a chance of further schooling due to economic circumstances. They were never more than an electoral bait to attract the votes of the private school parents who were the ones to reap most of the benefits from the scheme's introduction.

Menzies' education policy was characterised by this concern for the upper echelons of the school hierarchy, ie the higher levels of the academic secondary school (as distinct from the technical college) and the universities, and the maintenance of the private schools as a strong bulwark of this system. In July 1964 he spoke of his high regard for these institutions —

> I have always been a tremendous believer in schools and colleges at universities which have a background of religion, and the reason for that, the overwhelming reason for that is that I would get no satisfaction in thinking that we had pledged ourselves to a highly intellectual, if you like, highly pagan future ... I am all for the man whose character is rooted in eternal beliefs because he is a man, she is the woman who will assure the future of this country.[62]

However it was not simply Liberal party thinking which placed this premium on these sections of the school system — it permeated the attitudes of teachers and parents. It was taken for granted at this time that the smallest classes, the most experienced and highly qualified teachers would be reserved for the upper sections of the secondary school. Thus it was no surprise nor were there any public protests when federal funding began at the tertiary level. Even at this level the discrimination between university and non-university funding was strictly maintained.

The Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia (the Martin Committee) which presented its report in 1964 stressed that it was 'important to develop to the maximum all institutions which provide education in the technologies'.[63] It emphasised the functional importance of the technical colleges as a national investment and that they were a viable alternative to the universities. It recommended

that the Australian Universities Commission be enlarged into an Australian Tertiary Education Commission which would encompass the three strands of tertiary education in Australia — the universities, the technical colleges and the teachers' colleges. While the Menzies government accepted the Martin Committee's recommendations for the development of technical schooling through a system of Institutes of Colleges in each state, it would not establish the Tertiary Education Commission but instead set up the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education which was to administer grants to the colleges quite separately from the Australian Universities Commission. This ensured that there would be little chance of the colleges being funded at the same level as the universities.

Menzies made it quite clear that he regarded the colleges as lesser institutions which catered for students who were not of the intellectual calibre required by the universities. Nor were these colleges under any circumstances to attempt to raise themselves to the status of the universities.

> These colleges would provide for those students who, though qualified, do not wish to undertake a full university course, or whose chosen course is not considered appropriate for a university, or whose level at passing matriculation indicated a small chance of graduation from a university in minimum time or minimum time plus one year ... we entirely agree with the Committee's statements that these new type institutions should 'resist the temptation to copy the educational processes and curricula of universities' and that the responsibilities of these colleges to the community are 'of a different kind' from those of universities. Our support is founded on acceptance of this principle, and we do not make our support available for the development out of these colleges of new universities.[64]

These basic attitudes of Liberal party federal parliamentarians towards schooling which had emerged during the 1950s and 1960s were confirmed during the debates in parliament on the Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel Report). Liberal members repeatedly emphasised their belief in equality in school funding which meant the right of every child to receive equal per capita grants from the government. At the same time they supported the 'needs policy' as outlined by the Commission and saw no contradiction between this support and the policy of an equal per capita grant for each child.

In a telegram to the Victorian Council of School Organisations in 1973, the Liberal party Leader of the Opposition, Snedden, said

> It is a deliberate and malicious representation for anyone to inform you that the Liberal party is opposed to the needs basis as outlined in the Karmel Report ... The Liberal party supports the needs principle ... but also adheres to the principle that every child should attract a basic per capita grant.[65]

While the Liberal party members of parliament supported the main provisions of the two bills designed to implement the Karmel Report — the Schools Commission Bill and the State Grants (Schools) Bill — one of their main concerns in the debates was to maintain the equal per capita grants which clearly favoured those schools which already

had adequate resources. The willingness of Liberal party members to fight to the end on this issue, even when deserted by their Country party and Democratic Labor party colleagues, showed the strength of their loyalty and allegiance to the more well-endowed private schools, which, as has been indicated, was neither unexpected nor inconsistent with Liberal party policy in the federal sphere.

Labor party attitudes

In the states Labor had generally accepted the status quo in schooling so long as the working class child had some chance, however remote, of entering the ranks of the elite who reached the high schools and the universities. This was to be achieved by the liberal provision of scholarships and bursaries so that, in theory at least, the bright working class child, however economically disadvantaged he might be, could ascend the educational ladder to the university or technical college. This became the traditional Labor interpretation of equality of educational opportunity for all.

However successive Labor state governments, particularly in Queensland and New South Wales where Labor ruled for long periods in the first half of this century, developed few initiatives in education. It could readily be argued that Labor in power in Queensland hindered the progress of schooling in that state.

It was not until public interest in schooling was aroused in the 1950s that Labor was forced to look to the details of its school policies. Pressure from parents and teachers forced all parties to give closer attention to providing the basic facilities for schools within the state systems. The traditional pattern of uniformity for the primary systems was now extended to the secondary field with mass-produced buildings, equipment despatched regardless of need and teachers drafted without consideration of their particular interests or teaching skills. Equality of opportunity through uniformity, which had been the prerogative of the primary school child, was now open to secondary school students in most states by the late 1950s and early 1960s as secondary schooling was extended to all.

At the same time these developments threw into sharp relief the contrast between the facilities in the wealthy private schools and those offered by the state and Catholic systems. Whereas in the pre-war era few students went on to a post-primary school and few parents were concerned with secondary schools, now a whole new dimension was added to the situation — inequality of opportunity was seen to exist in the contrasts between the chicken coops springing up on disused land around the suburbs and the private schools with their playing fields and small classes. In this period Labor placed renewed emphasis on inequalities of opportunity in schooling and with parents and teachers stressed the need for provision of more finance to meet schools' material needs.

However it was not until the late 1960s that some Labor spokesmen began to distinguish between the needs of schools in different areas and to realise that uniformity was not necessarily synonymous with equality of opportunity. It was a simple, logical step to extend this concept of needs to the private system, but it was not done within the

Labor party without a long period of dissension and discussion.

At the federal level Labor school policy was formulated by sub-committees which reported to the biennial or special Commonwealth Conference of the Australian Labor party. Decisions made at these conferences were binding on the state branches of the Labor party and the members. Between 1961 and 1965 the standing committee on education consisted of two representatives from each state; in 1965 it was changed to a National Advisory Committee on Education which was made up of members appointed by the conference plus the shadow Minister or Minister for Education. This committee was dominated by federal parliamentarians, especially E G Whitlam and, until his death in 1972, Senator Samuel Cohen, who played a very active part in the development of Labor state aid and 'needs' policies in the late 1960s.

In 1953 the biennial conference of the Labor party had supported state aid to private schools, but with the split in 1954–55 when many supporters of state aid left the party this policy was reversed at the 1957 conference. This conference decided against direct state aid to private schools but supported aid payable to all secondary students by way of bursaries, scholarships or similar awards.[66]

State aid was first raised as an important election issue in this period in the Bendigo by-election of 1960. The Democratic Labor party and the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Mannix, waged a bitter campaign not only over the Labor party's attitude to communism but also over its repudiation of state aid. Mannix told Catholics

> If you vote for the A.L.P. you are voting to put into power a Government that will not give any help to pay for Roman Catholic or other non-state schools, and will deliberately deny justice to children in denominational primary schools.[67]

The Labor party retained the seat by a narrow margin and state aid immediately became a much more contentious issue within the party hierarchy. The 1961 biennial conference allowed the bursary provisions to be extended to the primary schools and in the 1961 federal election campaign the Labor leader, A A Calwell, promised an extensive array of scholarships to be awarded to students in private and state schools at all levels.

Nevertheless at this election, which Labor lost narrowly because of its failure to make any gains in Victoria, state aid was not a vital consideration, and it was not until the action of the Goulburn bishops in 1962 that it became a major national political issue.

The Goulburn incident was sparked off by a letter from the Southern Director of Education in New South Wales to the principal of Our Lady's Preparatory School in Goulburn in which it was stated that the annual Certificate of Efficiency required under the Public Instruction Act of 1916 would be issued subject to the provision of an additional sanitary convenience in the boys' toilet. This had been the subject of correspondence for some years but in February 1962, for the first time, the school opened without this certificate. In March Bishop Cullinane of Goulburn threatened to close the school because the Goulburn Town Clerk had indicated that fines would be imposed if the sanitary provisions were not improved.[68] In response to this

the Education Department again issued the certificate expressing the hope that the toilet facilities would soon be rectified.

This was the issue which was seized by Bishop Cullinane to draw attention to the financial crisis facing Catholic schools in the Goulburn area. Despite the Education Department's efforts at compromise the Bishop announced that the school would have to close in term two because it was still under order to meet the Department's requirements.[69] The New South Wales Labor Premier, R J Heffron and the Minister for Education, E Wetherell, refused to meet deputations on the matter and on 9 July 1962, 500 parents and parishioners voted to close all Goulburn Catholic schools as a protest against injustice to all schools. Cullinane declared

> The time has come for action. We must do more than complain. We have done that for eighty years and that has not got us very far.[70]

The Catholic high school and five primary schools were closed on Friday, 13 July and parents were urged to enrol their children in the local state schools. Another meeting a week later decided to re-open the Catholic schools.

This protest captured widespread national publicity. It was quickly followed by a large meeting of Catholic parents at Orange in New South Wales and meetings at Griffith and in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It gave great encouragement to the Parents and Friends Federation which had been formed in Victoria in 1961. After the Goulburn incident similar organisations campaigning for state aid for non-government schools were founded in other states affiliated to a national body — the Australian Parents Council. The Democratic Labor party which had always advocated state aid to private schools now made it a major domestic policy issue in the 1963 federal election campaign.

This new emphasis on state aid at the national level threw the Labor party into disarray and highlighted Labor disunity on this issue. In August 1963, three months prior to the federal elections, Labor's federal conference had reaffirmed its existing state aid policy. This cut directly across the resolution of the June conference of the New South Wales Labor party which requested the state government to provide or assist in the provision of science laboratories and teaching facilities in those schools where facilities were inadequate or non-existent. Nevertheless the state Labor government went ahead in its September budget to inaugurate a $21 pa means-tested payment to the parents of all secondary school students in their third year or above. This provoked a direct clash with the federal executive which objected to the payment being made to the parents rather than the students for it regarded this as tantamount to subsidising the payment of fees to private schools. With a federal election imminent this rift was left unresolved but Labor dissension on this issue was plain for all to see.

Over the next two years and during the course of three disastrous elections for the Labor party (the 1963 federal House of Representatives, the 1964 Senate and the 1965 New South Wales elections), it became clear that the promises of direct state aid made by the Liberals were important factors in their election victories. From then on the forces were at work within the Labor party to change its state

aid policy. With Gallup polls showing increasing public acceptance of state aid, the press almost unanimously in favour and the Protestant churches becoming tempted by the prospect of aid to their own schools which were also requiring finance to meet rising costs and increasing demands, it was almost inevitable that the Labor party would eventually accept state aid.

Very soon after the New South Wales election E G Whitlam, the deputy leader of the federal parliamentary party, declared that state aid was an accomplished fact and that the Labor party should adjust its policy in favour of state aid as soon as possible.[71] He also succeeded in persuading the parliamentary caucus not to oppose the bill to extend the science grants for a further three years and was active in the change of policy decided at the 1966 conference.

The 1965 conference had established a special sub-committee on state aid which recommended to the conference that a special conference on state aid be called at which the National Advisory Committee on Education would present a report. In May 1966 this committee, by a majority vote, recommended that direct aid be given to private and state school students and towards the training of private and state school teachers. The special federal conference in July-August 1966 at first deadlocked on the acceptance of the committee's report and unanimously opposed state aid. The next day the conference inexplicably reversed its previous stand and voted twenty-nine to seven in favour of financial aid to private schools.[72] Whether this vote was due to the absence of a leading opponent of state aid, F E Chamberlain, or to the change made by A A Calwell to support state aid, the decision was to be confirmed at the 1967, 1969 and 1971 federal conferences and thereby became firmly established as Labor policy.

The 'needs' policy was a natural corollary of Labor's support for state aid. It was an extension of Labor's traditional policy of equality of educational opportunity for the working class child to cover all 'deprived' children whatever school they attended. It was defined by the 1969 conference of the Labor party as follows:

> Australian Schools Commission
> 4. (*a*) The Commonwealth to establish an Australian Schools Commission to examine and determine the needs of students in government and non-government primary, secondary and technical schools and recommend grants which the Commonwealth should make to the States to assist in meeting the requirements of all school-age children on the basis of needs and priorities.
> In making recommendations for such grants to the States, the Commission shall have regard to
> (i) The primary obligation of governments to provide and maintain government school systems of the highest standard open to all children;
> (ii) The numbers of students enrolled in the various schools;
> (iii) The need to bring all schools up to acceptable standards;
> (iv) The need to ensure optimum use of resources in the establishment, maintenance and extension of schools ... [73]

This decision was an acceptable compromise which appeased both the Catholic members of the Labor party who saw the increasing impoverishment of the Catholic systems as a national problem, and

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also those Labor supporters who had opposed state aid going to the wealthy private schools and thereby accentuating the existing inequalities of opportunities for schooling. By emphasising the needs of all schools it effectively shut off these private schools from state aid while providing aid to the impoverished Catholic parish and secondary schools.

The wording of the resolution reflected this compromise and could be interpreted in at least two ways. On the one hand the commission was 'to examine and determine the needs of students in government and non-government' schools but when making grants was to understand that the *primary obligation* was to the state school systems. At the same time it was to 'bring all schools up to acceptable standards'. Which came first — bringing the state schools up to standard or bringing them all up together? By the time this resolution was to be translated into the terms of reference of the Interim Schools Commission, the 'primary obligation' clause had been lost and the commission was changed to 'examine the position of both government and non-government primary and secondary schools' with no reference to priorities.

The 1969 conference also proposed that if Labor won the 1969 election an emergency grant would be given to government and private schools as an interim measure pending the establishment of the Schools Commission. The 1971 Launceston conference replaced this emergency grant by the appointment of an interim committee of the Schools Commission which would ensure that funds would be allocated according to need rather than on a single grant basis.

The Karmel Report

Only eleven days after becoming Prime Minister in December 1972, Whitlam appointed an interim committee for the Australian Schools Commission. The 'needs' policy of the Labor party based on the 1971 conference resolution had been one of a number of important policy initiatives put forward by Labor which helped to ensure the party a majority of seats in the House of Representatives after twenty-three years on the Opposition benches.

Personal and political factors strongly influenced the selection of the interim committee members. Emeritus Professor Peter Henry Karmel, formerly professor of economics and vice-chancellor of the Flinders University of South Australia and at the time chairman of the Australian Universities Commission, was appointed chairman. He had been chairman of the South Australian enquiry into education in 1969–70 and was well known for ability to operate quickly and effectively as a committee chairman. His deputy was Jean Blackburn, a senior lecturer in education at Adelaide's Sturt College of Advanced Education, who drafted a large part of the interim committee's report. She had worked with Karmel on the South Australian enquiry where she had taken a prominent role as a consultant.

The other committee members were representative of various interest groups and aspects of schooling in Australia: Father E M Martin, Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, for the Catholic schools; E T Jackson, Victorian Director of Technical Education, for technical schools; A W Jones, Director-General of

Education in South Australia, for the education departments and the administrators; Peter Tannock, Dean of the Faculty of Education of the University of Western Australia and well known to the Labor Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, for the education schools in the universities; G Hancock, Principal Research Officer of the New South Wales Education Department, for research; W A White, a former president of the Australian Teachers' Federation, for the teachers; Alice Whitely, formerly headmistress of the Burwood Methodist Ladies' College, New South Wales, for the non-Catholic private schools; and M E Thomas, Director of Guidance and Adjustment for the New South Wales Education Department.

The terms of reference of the committee were strongly reminiscent of the 1971 Launceston conference resolution, and there is every indication that they were drawn up in close consultations between Whitlam and Beazley. The committee was charged with examining the position of both government and non-government primary and secondary schools in all states, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. It was to make recommendations to the minister as to

> the immediate financial needs of schools, priorities within those needs, and appropriate measures to assist in meeting those needs including
>
> (i) grants from the Commonwealth to the States in respect of both government and non government schools;
>
> (ii) funds for government schools and grants to non-government schools in the A.C.T. and the N.T.;
>
> (iii) The conditions under which those grants are to be made available.

The committee was also to establish acceptable basic standards for these schools and to take into account the growth of schools, the establishment of new ones as well as the particular needs of schools for the handicapped and 'the diversity of curricula to meet differing aptitudes and interests of students'.[74]

The committee was given less than six months to do its work. Its members visited 143 schools and spent a total of sixteen days in deliberation. It did not hold public sessions and accepted only written submissions from interested parties. It gained its main source of statistical data from a questionnaire circulated to the education departments and the private schools.

The report of the committee outlined a $660.1 million program for 1974 and 1975 to improve Australian primary and secondary schools.[75] This included $460.5 million for government schools and $179.3 million for private schools. The magnitude of these grants could be gauged by a comparison with the total of $111.5 million made in grants to these schools in 1971 and 1972 by the McMahon Liberal/Country party government.[76] However in the public debate on the report this proposed huge increase in expenditure on schools was almost completely overshadowed by the categorisation of private schools in order of need (H to A). The report stated that aid to those in category A could not be justified and recommended that the aid they were receiving ($62 pa per primary pupil and $104 pa per secondary pupil) be phased out in 1974 and 1975.[77] This was the only alteration

made to the report in its adoption by the federal cabinet when it voted to end these grants in 1973.

In the period following the publication of the report and during the various manoeuvres in parliament in the last three months of 1973, there was an intense level of activity from the pressure groups culminating in the split in the Opposition ranks which ensured the passage of the bills.

The pressure groups had been learning more sophisticated techniques since the early 1960s when they first became a major force in decision making related to schools. Up to that time the teachers' organisations were virtually the only active pressure groups. In the 1960s the parent organisations took an increasingly important role. Until 1973 the most successful of these organisations in each state affiliated to the Australian Parents Council, generally known as the Parents and Friends Associations. During the 1960s these organisations sustained a classic pressure group's campaign which featured, amongst other things, some of the largest public meetings on schooling seen in this country. In conjunction with the Democratic Labor party in parliament these groups were most successful in influencing the federal and state governments. It could be said that the greatly increased grants to the Catholic parish schools as provided in the Karmel Report owed much to their activities.

On the other side the Council for Defence of Government Schools and the Australian Council of School Organisations (the national organisation of state parent associations) engaged in what was essentially a rearguard action against state aid because at no stage could they muster the mass support to equal the Parents and Friends.

The Karmel Report changed all this — it threw the advocates of state aid into disarray and revitalised the state school parent organisations. Even though the report promised the Catholic systems aid at a level far greater than they could have hoped for under the previous government, the Parents and Friends were split. Some, like B A Santamaria, a leading Catholic layman, saw it as a plot to nullify the bargaining power of the Catholics, and to prepare the way for a Protestant backlash against the Catholic schools; they continued to support the principle of equal per capita payments for all children. Others regarded it as the beginning of a new era for the neglected parish schools and the poorer Catholic secondary schools. Whatever else it may have achieved the report effectively nullified for a time the Parents and Friends organisations as pressure groups. They had achieved far more than they had ever hoped for and yet with success came dissension. Many of their leaders were shown to be more concerned with the preservation of the grants for the small number of well endowed private schools than with the benefits which would accrue to the private schools as a whole.

The report received strong support from the Australian Teachers' Federation and the Australian Council of State School Organisations. When its implementation was threatened, both organisations, but especially the latter, played a considerable part in the final passage of the bills through parliament. The support by the Country party for the final compromise was very likely a result of the campaign waged by these organisations.

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Senator McManus (DLP) commented in relation to the Schools Commission Bill:

> I do not know of any Bill in respect of which my Party has received more deputations and representations. I personally have interviewed thirty-two deputations on this Bill.[78]

Parent and teacher activities reached a new level of organisation, for the first time matching the efforts of the Parents and Friends. These activities included letters, telegrams, advertisements, press releases and lobbying. Lobbyists were flown to Canberra at crucial times while district and local organisations were encouraged to apply pressure at the grass roots. This applied particularly to the rural areas where district councils of mothers' clubs and school committees were very active. The Swan Hill secretary wrote to the general secretary of the Victorian Federation of State Schools Mothers Clubs:

> I received your letter about the Schools Commission Bill late on Friday last, so had a busy week-end. We wrote to all the Senators and sent a telegram to Mr. Snedden. I also contacted our 16 clubs most of whom ... were writing to about 3 Senators.

The replies that these organisations received from the members of parliament indicated their concern at this public reaction.[79]

The Schools Commission Bill and the State Grants (Schools) Bill embodied the recommendations of the Karmel Report and were presented to the Australian parliament in the Spring session of 1973. The main debate centred on the Schools Commission Bill which defined the terms and conditions of appointment of the members of the commission and its functions. The bill was modelled on the pattern established by the Australian Universities Commission and the Australian Commission on Advanced Education.

The commission was charged with advising the Minister on 'the establishing of acceptable standards for buildings, equipment, teaching and other staff, and other facilities at government and non-government primary and secondary schools in Australia, and the means of attaining and maintaining those standards', and with formulating 'priorities to be given to the satisfying of these various needs' and for the allocation of financial assistance. It was directed, as in the terms of the 1971 Launceston conference decision, to 'have regard to the primary obligation ... for governments to provide and maintain government school systems that are of the highest standards and are open, without fees or religious tests, to all children'. The commission was to give attention to the handicapped, the disadvantaged, the isolated, the gifted child as well as aboriginal and migrant children. It was also 'to encourage diversity and innovation in education in schools, and in the curricula and teaching methods of schools'.[80]

The Opposition in the House of Representatives attacked the membership of the commission which was to consist of twelve members all appointed by the government. The Opposition wanted a chairman and two members appointed by the government plus seven selected from a panel of ten nominated by the Australian Education Council (this council consisted of the state and Australian ministers for education), four from a panel of seven nominated by the private schools and one from a panel of three from the Australian Committee on

Research and Development in Education.[81] The Opposition also wanted it specified in the bill that the commission was required to work in co-operation with the state education departments and the private schools and that the government was obliged to provide and maintain all school systems at a high standard rather than its primary obligation being towards the state systems.

In November the bill reached the Senate where the government was in a minority. There a successful amendment was moved by Senator McManus providing for the commission to consist of three appointees of the Minister, four from the Australian Education Council, three from the Episcopal Conference of Australia and two each from the Australian Teachers' Federation and the Australian Council of School Organisations.[82] Amendments stressing co-operation between the commission and the states and the need to meet the needs of all school systems were also passed by the Senate. The Opposition successfully moved for the deletion of the clause in the bill providing for the establishment of Schools Advisory Boards in the states and territories.

When the bill was returned to the House of Representatives that body agreed to only one of the fourteen amendments made by the Senate.[83] The government made it clear that these amendments were unacceptable and threatened the establishment of the commission. The press reports and the campaign waged by the state parent and teacher organisations during the period made it clear that these groups also regarded the Opposition's amendments as aimed at undermining the functioning of the commission.

After the Senate had persisted with its amendments and the bill returned to the House for a second time a compromise was reached with the Country and Democratic Labor parties. On its third appearance in the Senate the government put forward a series of amendments which accepted the principle of co-operation by the commission with the states and territories, and agreed that all schools (government and private) should be brought up to the highest standards, but retained the original method of appointing the commission as proposed by the government. The Liberal party remained alone in its opposition to this compromise and with the support of the Country and Democratic Labor parties the legislation passed.[84]

The government had also to compromise to enable the States Grants (Schools) Bill to be passed. This bill aimed at providing the grants recommended by the Karmel Report except that the grants to the Category A schools were to cease in 1973. This was unacceptable to the Liberal party which wanted a basic per capita grant paid to all schools plus further grants according to needs.[85] The compromise which was finally passed, again with the support of the Country and Democratic Labor parties, provided for per capita grants of $55 for primary and $85 for secondary Category A schools in 1974 and $50 and $78 respectively in 1975. These were lower than originally envisaged by the Karmel Report. Schools in Category B were to receive higher grants than recommended by the report. In their support for this compromise both the Country and Democratic Labor party senators made it clear that they did not favour the phasing out of grants to these more well-endowed private schools after 1975.

The acceptance of the Karmel Report by the Labor party and the Australian parliament followed the Australian tradition in schooling and in other areas where the party laid down a very broad outline of policy which was left for the administrators and professionals to interpret. Much of the Karmel Report was concerned with areas of policy making where there had been little or no prior discussion within the Labor party. Examples include the general sympathy of the report with educational innovations; the establishment of the Special Projects Fund; the emphasis on bringing the community into the schools and vice versa; the chapters on special education and libraries. By its adoption of the report federal Labor gave its blessing to a number of policy decisions the implications of which were not fully understood by the rank and file of the party, let alone the public in general.

This procedure was not new in the history of Australian schooling. Many of the reforms instituted by Peter Board in New South Wales while Labor was in office, by Alfred Williams in South Australia and later by Harold Wyndham were carried out under the Labor banner of providing equality of opportunity but with little or no consideration within the Labor party of the impact or import of these reforms.

It was in this area of equality of opportunity that the Karmel Report departed fundamentally from Labor party policies. In the pre-war era equality of opportunity meant that the working class child, using his intelligence, was able to compete with the more privileged child for entry into the elite secondary schools and the more desirable jobs, resources and power. In the 1950s and 1960s, with secondary schooling for all, all children gained access to these schools but this did not automatically mean that access was gained to these desirable jobs — basically because the qualifications required for these jobs were raised at the same time. Tertiary schooling was now required for access to these desirable positions; hence equality of opportunity became a question of entry to the tertiary institutions. Should all students have access to these institutions or should they continue to be confined to an elite?

The answer of the Karmel Report was that they should continue to cater only for an elite. The report, while paying only cursory attention to talent selection and the upward social mobility aspects of education, emphasised equality of diversity with the removal of the more obvious signs of financial inequality in this diversity. The report implied that any previous encouragement given to social mobility was to be diverted into equality through enjoyment and participation. School was no longer to be a preparation for work in an adult society but was to be enjoyable and fruitful in itself.

In outlining the objectives of the committee's program of special grants for disadvantaged schools, the committee sketched out its approach to equality of opportunity as it applied in those areas where it would seem to have been urgently needed.

Its three objectives were all part of the same concept — an intensive effort to vary the school programs in ways which would enable disadvantaged children to learn more successfully. The emphasis here was on satisfaction for the child through the possible achievements which were now opened to him by the diversity of educational experience; an emphasis on school as a pleasant experience and not

merely a preparation for later life; a hope that schools might become open institutions interacting with their communities in this happy atmosphere.

> It [the committee] also sees no reason why schooling should not be regarded as a life enjoyable and satisfying in its own right rather than a credit note drawn on the future. The school does not exist to grade students for employers or for institutes of higher learning. Nor should it regard higher education as the only avenue to a life of dignity and worth.[86]

There is no evidence that this new interpretation of equality of opportunity was discussed by the Labor party or put forward in any Labor party material or resolutions. In the parliamentary debates on the Schools Commission Bill this important aspect of the report received scant attention. The only member to mention it in any detail was Anthony Lamb (the then Labor member for La Trobe) who saw one of the aims of the commission as being 'to reduce differences in performance' so that equality of opportunity would be achieved by 'compensatory education for the socially disadvantaged pupils'.[87]

Speaking to the Australian Teachers' Federation conference in January 1974 the Prime Minister, E G Whitlam, indicated that he too still held the traditional Labor party view on equality of educational opportunity.

> There is a simple way to test whether genuine equality of opportunity exists. We should look to see whether those going on to higher education are drawn from all groups of the population in the same proportion as each is represented in the population.[88]

During the height of the Schools Commission controversy in 1973 Professor Karmel elaborated on his attitude towards equality of opportunity in the course of his Frank Tate memorial lecture —

> One ought to be aiming at inculcating into these people the basic skills necessary to participate in society. We don't have to aim at making them all doctors or professors and so on. What we want to make them is citizens who will work within the society — and, after all, we've got to get away from the notion that successful life is to be measured either in terms of whether you've got a Ph.D., or you've got a high income. It might be measured in lots of other terms.[89]

Was there any real difference between these comments and those cited below from a Country party spokesman and an *Australian* editorial?

> The millions of dollars the Federal government is feeding into the education of lower class children could produce generations of sophisticated intellectual Australians — with little more to do than wonder about their incredible qualifications ... Many find themselves in jobs vastly inferior to the roles that they have been prepared for.[90]

> ... at a time when we already have a fair number of arts graduates driving buses and collecting garbage — since apart from teaching there is no other sphere of activity calling desperately for their services — we must ask ourselves whether the extension of this field of tertiary education to even more students is really the first priority for this country at this time ...[91]

In his lecture Karmel was advocating a view which has gained some support: that all that can be done for the disadvantaged is to ease their burden and make their school life happier. They would not only be less likely to knock society but also less inclined to think in terms of social mobility and in turn raise the embarrassing question of tertiary schooling for all. The placing of the emphasis on equality through diversity rather than equality of opportunity to reach the more desirable jobs, resources and power in the community, could be seen as a diversionary manoeuvre and not in the interest of the disadvantaged sections of the community for whom the Labor party had so frequently expressed concern.

What occurred in the two years after 1972 supported this view. Despite the rhetoric of equality of opportunity, community involvement and diversity in facilities, government policy primarily became an accounting operation to remedy existing deficiencies. The Karmel Report was a document offering 1960s financial solutions (with some tokenism to contemporary education thinking) to deep-seated problems. It had no other alternative because of the narrow educational thinking of ALP federal conferences and their search for a political compromise to the state aid debate. Hence the major part of the Karmel Report deals with deficiencies and finance, not political or bureaucratic control of education systems. What is important, however, is that it did establish an Australian Schools Commission which could attempt to broaden the Labor's educational objectives and build upon the areas of the Karmel Report such as community control, alternative schooling approaches, teacher development.

Given its narrow brief, the Karmel Committee's recommendations offered a systematic, but still patchwork, approach to remedying school deficiencies. The three important deficiencies — inequalities in educational provision, insufficient physical and human resources and the low quality of curriculum resources and teaching — have been attacked by heavy financial outlays. Thus the total federal government finance to schools was expected to be $800 million for the two years 1974 and 1975, which contrasted distinctly with $173 million for 1970–71 and 1971–72. This was a significant development in financial involvement in education — from a skeleton to a substantial role. However, this is deceptive because, due to the high capital component in this initial outlay and the rate of inflation, the impact of funding in alleviating school deficiencies weakened.

Much of Labor's financial efforts were not actually directed towards the pursuit of equality of educational opportunity, but just to keeping afloat state and Roman Catholic school systems. Thus what was to be an offensive campaign became almost a rearguard action.

This situation was not helped by the government's ill-found assumptions on its financial assistance to the schools. The first assumption was that because the state governments had all agreed by 1963 that the federal government must come to the rescue of the schools, party politics would not rear its ugly head with the distribution of Australian Schools Commission funds. This assumption was quickly destroyed, for example, in NSW, where the Askin government attempted to gain political mileage by procrastinating on the use of building and recurrent grants. On the other hand, in Victoria, which

championed 'state rights', the Education Department acted quickly in sending federal funds to disadvantaged schools in Melbourne's western suburbs.

A more serious problem related to a second assumption, that the state education departments and Roman Catholic education offices contained sufficient educational administration expertise to disburse federal funds to priority areas. This was a disaster, analogous to Menzies' science laboratories legislation coming into effect when there was a gross shortage of qualified science teachers. This time there was a dearth of talented administrators at a time when the school systems were expected to move into new directions of control and administration.

How could it have been otherwise when most administrators and school principals had been trained in traditional education department bureaucracies, and had a strong distrust of parents, local communities and teachers. Mr Beazley believed that this problem could be overcome by the establishment of regional school boards. There is nothing to suggest that education departments will decentralise their power even at a state level, let alone regional level. The Australian Schools Commission has realized that the education departments cannot provide innovative administrators and have called on the universities and colleges to provide part-time personnel for its many research and implementation committees.

It is easy to argue that the Australian government's efforts with schooling have not had their desired effect. Certainly finance alone will not and cannot alleviate the deficiencies. Moreover, the injection of funds into improving the quality of schooling through teachers and resources takes longer than two or three years. Teacher morale has not improved but this is not the fault of the Schools Commission. What was encouraging, despite these limitations, was that the Labor government's school policies supported some fresh educational thinking. Funds are now being injected into primary schools after years of Menzies-type elitism, focusing on secondary schools. Disadvantaged schools in many parts of Australia have been recognised officially and are almost being directly funded from Canberra. Federal funds are already involved in the preparation of teachers for special schools. Education and teacher centres have already been financed by federal funds; recognition exists at last that the continuous development of the teacher is a vital input in the teaching experience. Furthermore, teachers themselves are being supported in their research and studies related to the classroom through the research and innovations funds. This project has had a remarkable response from teachers and although many teachers are disappointed when they are denied funds, the federal government has brought educational research to the classrooms of Clifton Hill and Surrey Hills.

Thus, although there is a mixture of disappointment and enthusiasm with Labor's schools policies, its achievements were encouraging. It had at least salvaged the government and Roman Catholic school systems. Furthermore, the Labor government had taken its cue from the Karmel Committee and offered some important new directions for financial assistance to special needs and areas. These will remain as long as there is an Australian Schools Commission. It is the existence

of this authority which creates the more optimism, because the Schools Commission, supported by a sympathetic Education Minister and cabinet, could have a critical impact on our schools. One hopes that while it continues to attack disadvantage it also will become more critical of privilege.

If Labor's policies towards the schools had produced a mixed feeling the same cannot be said of its pre-school/child-care policies. Two years after its election the government's policies and programs in this area were extremely disappointing. The government had failed to come to terms with this problem and the implications of this problem, ie if something was not done immediately, much of the useful work in supporting primary schooling would be lost.

Firstly the government had openly shown that it did not place enough importance on this area of schooling. Any government that promises in May 1974 to spend $130 million pa, chops it to $34 million pa in July 1974, and settles for $70 million pa for both pre-school and child-care facilities, reveals its own confusion and doubts in an area where today there should be little debate. Admittedly government financial stringency had influenced the decision, but the pre-school/child-care policy should never have reached this level of disrepair.

Secondly, cabinet politics and ministerial conservatism throughout three years of government had both combined to place Labor's pre-school policy in jeopardy. Labor's federal conference's pre-school education policy in 1971 forced the government to establish a committee (the Fry Committee) which sought ways to financially assist pre-schools. By 1973 women's organisations and some educators had accepted overseas patterns that pre-schooling must be a part of a comprehensive child-care system. Pre-schooling in the isolated and formal structures was both educationally and socially (in terms of working mothers) inappropriate. Cabinet at least was sympathetic to this view and was willing to support the argument that pre-schooling should become part of social welfare. Mr Beazley refused to concede this point and a stalemate, helped by the economic problems of 1974, resulted. The Education Minister, Mr Beazley, was guilty of conservatism in this dispute and he could not be convinced that his thinking on pre-schools and the working-family was educationally and politically unacceptable.

The great tragedy is that while Australia is hopelessly behind the rest of the Western world in its pre-schooling facilities, this internal political dispute pushed us still further behind. Perhaps the only way to return to the tracks will be to accept a Priorities Review Staff recommendation that child-care, including pre-schooling, should be reassigned to a minister who is not involved with schools or social welfare.

A final major area in Labor's school policy was in the field of technical and further education. The Kangan Committee's recommendations on technical and further education were accepted by the Australian government in April 1974. In tabling the Kangan Report Mr Beazley predicted that it would 'revolutionise' technical education; although this was an extravagant claim, the report did at least provide for the comprehensive modernisation of this neglected area of schooling. It introduced new emphases and initiatives. For example, the govern-

ment expected that technical schools should be geared to meet the individual needs of students as people rather than meeting the man-power needs of industry. It also expected that technical school courses would create flexible study procedures so that students could adopt a variety of approaches to reach the same level of attainment. This expectation recognised some of the existing study problems of technical school students many of whom had 'dropped out' of secondary schools.

The most exciting aspect of Labor's technical schools policy was probably found in the acceptance of recurrent or further education. The Labor government was prepared to fund programs that would provide recurrent education for either the up-grading of vocational qualifications or for personal development. It must be stressed that this was not seen as support for existing middle class adult education programs — at least from Kangan funds. Instead it offered provision for life-long educational opportunities for blue and white collar workers. It was this initiative, above all others in the Kangan Report, that approached a revolutionary development.

The weaknesses of the Kangan Report were that it left too much control with the existing technical school bureaucracies in the states. Moreover, it did not devote enough attention to the problem of training a new breed of technical teachers, currently a conservative teacher in educational terms — to meet the new challenges and demands in technical and further education. Furthermore, the technical school policy did not demand enough from employers in aspects like finance sharing or time release for further education; in western Europe the employer is expected to finance technical and further education for the personal and vocational development of his workers. Finally, the government reduced its promised financial outlay from $105 million for the period 1 July 1974 to 31 December 1975 to $96 million for the years 1974–75 and 1975–76. Yet this cutback should be seen in the context of only $28.6 million allocated to technical schools from Canberra in 1973–74.[92]

The Australian Schools Commission *Report for the Triennium 1976–78* released in mid-1975 gave the Labor Government further opportunities to expand its financial commitment to the schools. It also invited the government to take up the untidy ends of the 1973 Karmel Report, especially in the area of diversity in types of schooling, socio-economic disadvantage and the professional development of the teachers to keep abreast of educational developments. But these recommendations came on the eve of the government's decision to take a strong stand against inflation. One such proposed measure, which it rejected in the 1974 budget, was to make cutbacks in the education estimates, including a rumoured $50 million to the schools. Although announced at the time of this book going to press, the 1975 budget has yet to be implemented. However, the rumours of impending reductions to federal funds for schools has already prompted a vigorous response from teachers, parents and others. A strong lobby was sent to Canberra in an attempt to convince the government of its folly. At the same time the Australian Teachers' Federation executive proposed a one-day national strike of teachers (if executed the first ever in Australia) as a protest. This did not eventuate because the teachers'

unions in the states are not bound by the Australian Teachers' Federation's decisions. Nevertheless, in most states the intense political activity by teachers and parents organisations could not have gone unnoticed in Canberra. The Labor Government was also receiving other vibrations from the electorate; one which was the emergence of a back-lash against heavy funding for schools.

One thing appears certain: the heady, champagne, days of 1973 for Australian schools have passed from the scene. They are quickly being replaced by old suspicions and new doubts as Australia waits to see the development of the education policies of the newly elected Fraser government.

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3

Education and economic policy

P. Dwyer, B. Wilson & R. Woock

Source: P. Dwyer, B. Wilson & R. Woock, *Confronting School and Work: Youth and Class Cultures in Australia* (Studies in the Society, 23), George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, pp. 69–89.

Economic policy has a particularly important link with education, insofar as it both influences and reflects the expectations and aspirations that members of a society develop during particular periods of history. What is happening in schools in the 1980s must be seen in the light of the attitudes towards education developed by parents and children when those children first began their schooling in the early 1970s. The expectations and aspirations of working class families, in particular, have recently been discouraged and thwarted, not because of a change in the outlook of these parents and their children, nor because of a change in practice by those working in government schools, but rather because of changes in national economic policy. Changes in educational policy were instituted because the economic demands of the 1980s were seen to be markedly different from those of the first twenty years of the post-war period. The primary importance of economic factors is clearly indicated by the impact of youth unemployment, the growing emphasis on transition education, and, in general, the cutbacks in funding, staffing and student numbers within the sphere of public education in Australia.

The expansion of capitalist society

Australia shared with the rest of the capitalist world in the significant expansion that took place in the years after the Second World War. The growth of educational institutions was part of this more general expansion, and it promoted new expectations concerning the importance of secondary, and even tertiary, education as a basic means of personal fulfilment and economic advancement. The populations of western societies, in particular, came to share the view that economic growth, and the personal affluence associated with it, were the normal and natural outcome of capitalist society and that, as a result, they could view the future with the confidence that their own, and especially their children's, claims on an ever-increasing standard of living were assured.

In such a climate, the growth of the population was also given high priority, and this was reflected in the post-war 'baby boom' and the strenuous efforts made by the Australian Government to attract large numbers of migrants to the country. The high percentage of the population below the age of 21 became a market in itself, which was cultivated by the media, advertisers and the retail and service industries. An image of the 'youth culture' was generated with a major emphasis on self-fulfilment, freedom, affluence, entertainment and excitement, probably best summed up in the initially successful Big M advertisements developed by the Milk Board at the end of the 1970s. Thus, despite the prolonged economic recession that began to set in at the beginning of the 1970s, the expectation of widespread affluence was still dominant, the recession was continually viewed as merely a passing phase, and renewed boom conditions based on resources development and foreign investment were confidently predicted. Expanding education, and the cultivation of a 'youth culture' with its associated image of affluence, were obviously directly linked to the economic expansion of capitalist society and the belief in self-sustained growth that went with it.

The emphasis placed on education during this period was not merely a result of the general euphoria about the success of capitalist society in providing ever-expanding opportunities for its members. It was also related to the specific needs of the post-war economy with its heavy reliance on the development of the managerial, professional and technical skills needed for the expansion of manufacturing industry and advanced technology. Changes in the economic structure of society contributed to a change of emphasis in the part education was meant to play in enabling the changes to take place. In writing of this process, the American economist J. K. Galbraith referred to *The New Industrial State*.

> Education — higher education in particular — is obviously strategic. It is, among other things, an apparatus for affecting belief and inducing more critical belief. The industrial system, by making training and educated manpower the decisive factor of production, requires a highly developed educational system. If the educational system serves generally the beliefs of the industrial system, the influence and monolithic character of the latter will be enhanced ...
>
> Modern higher education is, of course, extensively accommodated to the needs of the industrial system. The schools and colleges of business administration ... are preparatory academies for the technostructure. The great prestige of the pure and applied sciences and mathematics in modern times, and the support accorded them, reflect the needs of the technostructure. The ample sums available for research and related graduate training in these areas reflect specific adaptation to such need, whereas the lesser prestige and lesser support for the arts and humanities suggest their inferior role. (Galbraith, 1967: 372-73)

During the post-war period, Australia had a population growth of 2½ per cent per annum, and an economic growth rate of 4½ per cent per annum, combined with comparatively high levels of employment in general, and new employment opportunities in the manufacturing and service industries in particular. Average unemployment in the decade 1955-65, for example, was 1½ per cent, a remarkably low figure by comparison with some major trading partners (Jones, 1982: 125).

Immigration accounted for 73 per cent of the expansion of the workforce, and at the same time foreign investment added a further 10 per cent to the available capital funds for economic expansion during the 1950s and 1960s. The size of that investment was significant, growing from $85.2 million in 1948-49 to $967 million in 1968-69. In the immediate post-war period it was devoted mainly to the expansion of manufacturing industry, with the result that 'in every rapidly changing industry practically every major innovation was introduced by a firm wholly or partly owned by one or more of the overseas firms' (Rowley, 1972: 270). With the discovery of mineral deposits in the 1960s, foreign investment began to shift to the resources development sector of the economy. The recent decline in manufacturing industry and the associated loss of jobs illustrates the extent to which foreign investment affects the direction of national economic policy.

Economic expansion in the immediate post-war period relied heavily on the concentration of foreign investment in the manufacturing sector for such items as cars, electrical goods, steel and engineering works, as well as building and construction. All of these areas sought new skill levels, and education provided the much-needed stimulus to provide tertiary industry with the required personnel.

As Australia emerged from the war, it possessed education systems that provided little opportunity for the mass of the population to extend their education beyond the primary level. Higher education was regarded as the privilege of the few, indicated by the small number of universities and tertiary colleges that existed and the lack of financial support provided for students from low-income families. The majority of students were expected to leave school at fourteen, which was the end of compulsory schooling, and employers accepted lower level school certificates as adequate qualifications even for white-collar clerical positions in the job-market. The 'image' presented by this situation was that of a working class society with low aspirations concerning education. Within the space of a single decade, that image was transformed, and Australians began to see themselves as members of an educationally high-aspiring middle class society. From 1951 to 1956 school enrolments in Australia grew from 1 350 000 to 1 785 000, which was a bigger increase than that which occurred over the whole of the previous fifty years. The most striking increase occurred within secondary education. By 1968, enrolments in government secondary schools, had trebled (Fitzgerald, 1970: 9).

This increase in numbers reflected a change in aspirations with regard to schooling, and especially towards the desirability of tertiary education. For the first time since the introduction of compulsory schooling in Australia, tertiary education was promoted, and seen, as if it were a 'normal' end result of schooling. Surveys of parent attitudes revealed a growing emphasis on education as the key to success in adult life, with a 1967 survey revealing that 73 per cent of parents desired their children to continue their education beyond the age of seventeen, while 'approximately one in every two of the people interviewed indicated a preference for some form of full time education beyond the usual secondary years' (Vinson and Robinson, 1968: 39). This shift in aspirations coincided with a virtual trebling of university enrolments between 1956 and 1967 and the development of new universities and

other tertiary colleges which reached its peak in the early 1970s.

This expansion of educational provisions 'in response to' the significant shift in social aspirations, was not accidental. It was in fact integral to the policies of economic growth adopted after the Second World War in all western capitalist societies. Post-war reconstruction, the expansion of secondary industries and their supporting tertiary or service industries, the development of Third World markets for the purposes of profit and cold-war politics, and the increasing emphasis on technological innovation for consumer goods and sophisticated weaponry all demanded a more highly skilled workforce in general, and a ready supply of people with specialised academic training in particular.

In Australia, the expansion of education accompanied basic changes to the structure of the Australian economy. Although primary industries remained major export income-earners for Australia into the 1970s, there can be no doubt that the major developments within the Australian economy in the post-war period took place within secondary industry (Rowley, 1972: 73). Recent documentation demonstrates, in fact, that this type of structural change was envisaged during the Second World War and became a major source of disagreement at the official level between Australia and the United States at that time (Bell, 1977: chap. 5). Certainly the growth of the workforce, the intake of migrants, and the expansion of urban areas were all tied to the transformation of Australia into a manufacturing nation. Between 1940 and 1960, the number of factories more than doubled, energy supplies to secondary industries increased almost four times and a complete range of consumer goods from cars to television sets were Australia-made. This expansion was linked to substantial investment by, and dependence upon, foreign capital—particularly from the United States (Wheelwright, 1974: 47-65).

The importance of increased education for developing a more highly skilled workforce led to the acceptance of higher education as a major social priority. This priority was gradually acknowledged at the State and Federal levels by the governments of the day through the provision of financial aid to schools, the training of new teachers, the establishment of tertiary scholarships and student support schemes and the promotion of education as an 'investment' in the future. The Martin Report on tertiary education in Australia most clearly articulated the view that educational spending should be seen as an investment in human capital:

> It is both realistic and useful to regard education as a form of national investment in human capital. Although there is a sense in which education continues throughout a lifetime, formal education does not usually extend beyond the period 6 to 18 years. This is a period of investment in education, from which the nation may expect a series of beneficial returns . . . the literate are worth more than the illiterate, the highly skilled usually have larger incomes than the unskilled . . . Education makes an important contribution to the development of a responsible and enlightened community and from it flows a deepening understanding of human nature, a raising of cultural standards. (Martin Report, 1964: 4-5)

The years of growth

In 1965, the Federal Government introduced the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education which was to oversee and co-ordinate the upgrading of technical colleges to colleges of advanced education. In the early reports of the Advisory Committee, it was made quite clear that the colleges were to be strictly vocationally oriented, with little research, inflexible enrolment guidelines, and no opportunities for 'general' education. By implication, only those who were sufficiently intellectually and financially able to attend universities were to receive an education '... befitting a free man'. However, the Martin Report did articulate a new emphasis on tertiary education in Australia. It quite clearly expressed the conventional wisdom of the time, when it claimed that 'education should be regarded as an investment which yields direct and significant economic benefits through increasing the skill of the population and through accelerating technological progress' (Martin Report, 1964: 1). The link between increased opportunity in schooling, the prospect of tertiary study, and economic growth as a personal as well as social goal, also became part of the conventional wisdom. The Schools Commission, established by the Whitlam Government, acknowledged this in 1973 when its interim report asserted that 'in general, it could be said that equality has been interpreted as equal access to schools of roughly equal standards, and culminating in entry to tertiary educational institutions with a consequent claim on higher incomes' (Karmel Report, 1973: 16).

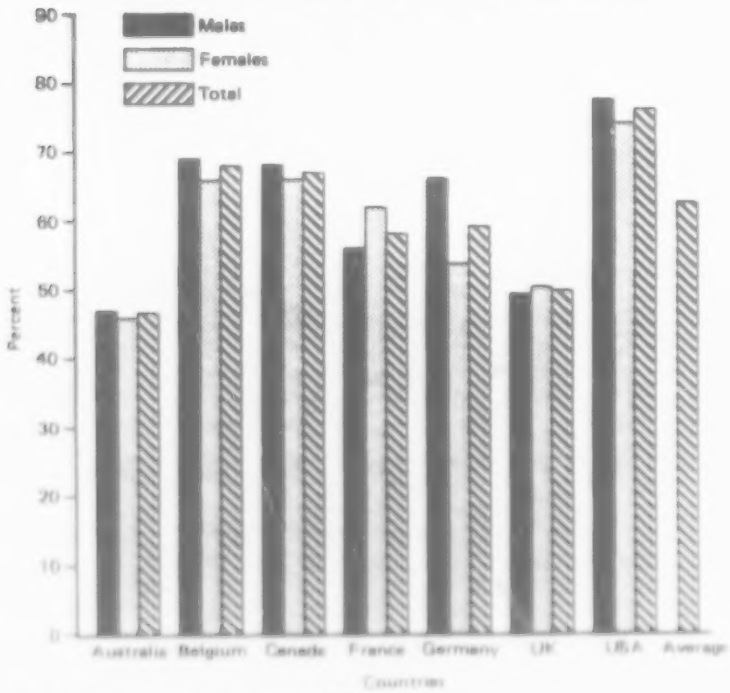
It was obvious, at the same time, that tertiary education could not be in actual fact the norm. In Australia, growth in the white-collar sector was balanced by the use of migrant and female labour at the lower levels of industry. Although Australia rather belatedly swung in behind the rest of the capitalist world and promoted the expansion of tertiary education, it also effectively maintained the elitist and class-bound features of its universities and other post-secondary institutions. Even on the most optimistic estimates, by the mid-1970s less than a fifth of young Australians were undertaking degree or diploma courses—and these it must be remembered were the 'extravagant' Whitlam years.

Certainly, by comparison with other nations in the western world, Australia's investment in education has not been high. Australia has, in fact, always fared very unfavourably in its levels of educational expenditure and achievement by comparison with other advanced industrial nations in the western world. Even allowing for the significant expansion of education that occurred in the post-war period, this is still a comparatively 'under-educated' society. It may be true that in the recent past it has begun to bridge the gap, but assertions that it has now become an 'over-educated' nation are facile, and ultimately, grossly misleading. Even now, only 46 per cent of Australian children reach the senior levels of secondary schooling (the percentages for Japan and the United States are 76 and 72 per cent respectively), and only 5 per cent of the 20-24 age group are involved in higher education, as compared with 22 per cent in the United States and 23 per cent in Finland. In the 15-19 year age group Australia is fourth last, compared to other OECD countries, and in the 20-24 year age group it is last.

In terms of its own past, however, the provision of educational places in Australia during the post-war period represented a considerable

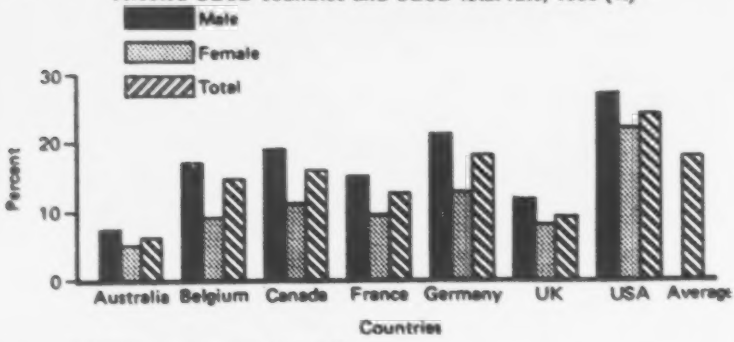
advance. The comparatively sudden emergence of high educational aspirations of parents for their children, plus the rapid increase in the pupil population, strained the resources of education systems throughout the nation from the early 1950s onwards. Initially, problems were created by the shortage of teachers in general and qualified teachers in particular; also the States had insufficient funds to allocate to their education systems since the funds which they received from the Commonwealth for this purpose were grossly inadequate. Schools that were well-established and well-endowed with regard to qualified staff, facilities, educational prestige, tradition and area for expansion, were more capable of benefitting from the provision for the sudden increase of aspirations and opportunities. The strains of coping with these aspirations and providing for the opportunities were not evenly spread. As a consequence these educational developments contributed markedly to a form of social inequality founded on the gap between aspiration and achievement. This occurred because the developments took place within pre-existing educational structures that were designed for the very different form of social aspirations that remained within Australia until the late 1940s. Even into the 1960s, virtually the same structures were expected to meet the needs of mass education and high aspiration of a multi-cultural student body up to and beyond the senior level. The attention given to the rapid erection of

Figure 4.1 Full time education participation rates for the 15-19 years age group, selected OECD countries and OECD total rate, 1980 (%)



Source: OECD Working Papers, April 1979

Figure 4.2 Full time education participation rates for the 20-24 years age group, selected OECD countries and OECD total rate, 1980 (%)



Source: OECD Working Papers, April 1979

new, often temporary, school buildings, and the strenuous attempts needed to attract as many teachers as possible to staff the classrooms, left all too little time and effort for examining structural and qualitative issues concerning the nature and purpose of Australian education.

It could be argued that, until the post-war period, the dilemmas of universal education were resolved by promoting academic achievement within those levels of education that were open to the hand-picked few, and concentrating primarily on practical skills within those levels that catered for the majority. This would certainly help to explain why the rapid expansion of secondary and higher education in the post-war period has led to unresolved conflicts of purpose, since the type of educational practice suited to the more academically adept and successful proved less readily adaptable for the provision of educational opportunity in the population as a whole.

The ability of students, parents and teachers to fulfil the new aspirations which emerged was simultaneously affected by the process of social change. Changes in educational policies could not be effected in isolation, and were disrupted or complicated by the changes going on in other aspects of people's lives. The impact of this change, combined with parents' heightened aspirations for their children, often led them to seek the solutions to social problems from schools and teachers. Many of the debates that have arisen concerning the role of the school within society are directly related to the question of what responsibility the school should accept for providing answers to, or at least information about, a wide range of social issues, be it sex education, the drug problem, career guidance, health education, driving instruction or even modes of dress. The worrying impact of change, however, also led some people to lay the blame for the increase of social problems at the school's door.

The pupils themselves were subjected to a variety of influences that in many ways competed with both the home and the school as formative influences on their personal development. The peer group often exerted strong pressure on individual pupils to conform, and the cultivation of the teenage market by commercial interests and 'pop culture' often added to the problems of boredom and lack of interest that had always confronted teachers. The effects of prolonged adolescence, the

increasing standard of living, changing attitudes towards sex and drugs, and even the significance of the teenage vote were also factors that affected the school population in a variety of ways. *Puberty Blues* by Carey and Lette provides a partial, but powerful description of peer group pressure and the price paid for resisting it.

At a time when school systems were coping with the problems of expansion, teachers were also having to cope with changes in the content of the school curricula due to the advances made in different areas of specialisation, and the development of new subject areas required for new job opportunities related to economic and technological growth. This applied not only to the natural sciences, but also to the humanities subjects.

Of particular importance was the increased influence of educational theory and practice from overseas. The professional development of teachers demanded some acquaintance with the writings of people like Peters, Neill, Freire, Montessori, Illich, Bruner, Skinner, Piaget and Bernstein, and some readiness to evaluate and choose between a variety of teaching methods, ranging from programmed learning and objective tests through to integrated studies and discovery learning.

The problem of inequality

The emergence of educational and social inequality as a major concern dates from the mid-1960s onwards. Both Australian and foreign research studies demonstrated that the provision of expanded 'opportunity' had achieved comparatively little as far as the egalitarian ideals of western societies were concerned. The Schools Commission and the Poverty Inquiry documented the extent of continuing inequality associated with social class, ethnicity and gender. A variety of government-funded programmes were developed to provide greater support for schools that were considered to be 'disadvantaged'. With the publication in 1973 of the report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, a new phase in educational policy-making was introduced with major emphasis on Commonwealth funding for all kinds of schools according to a criterion of 'need'. The definition of need included explicit reference to the notion of disadvantage:

> In all school systems and in some independent schools, the level of resources for teaching falls considerably below that in the better endowed ones (both government and non-government) and is below that required to implement modern educational methods and to prepare all children, irrespective of their rate and style of learning, to full participation in a complex society ... The Committee concluded that it should make its needs assessments along two dimensions: inputs of resources to schools and school systems, and degree of disadvantage of groups and pupils in particular schools. (Karmel Report, 1973: 48, 50)

This new policy, and the funds made available to implement it, gave real impetus to a variety of both long-standing and more recent

innovative programmes within particular schools aimed at overcoming or compensating for disadvantage and redressing the inequalities of outcome from schooling. The main approaches adopted were derived from three broad traditions of thought concerning the importance of education.

Education as training

Until the 1950s, much of the thinking on educational inequality was based on an assumption concerning the 'natural capabilities' of different classes, races and ethnic groups. This assumption was a reflection of economic needs and groupings in society. In Australia, for example, there was little questioning of the very high correlation between ruling class origins, private school education and university training set against working class background, state school education and non-completion of secondary schooling. In a predominantly working class society, with a relatively small and distinct ruling class, it was taken for granted that education for the masses meant a training in basic skills. This type of thinking, still popular in some quarters, has influenced some of the programmes adopted in the past decade. It attempts to explain inequality by reference to differences in natural ability, and uses arguments based on IQ levels, parental aspiration, culture of poverty, behavioural patterns, or spontaneous interests. It accepts a simplistic distinction between mental and manual skills, and seeks a solution for inequality by catering for the 'real' needs of the deprived, that is, by offering them the less 'academic' subjects and training them in some manual skill that will open up for them valuable job opportunities on the labour market. This approach was sometimes characterised as 'pottery for the masses', with the implication that, instead of seeking more equitable outcomes from the schooling regardless of individual or class disadvantages, the realistic option was to accept a 'diversity' of outcomes and provide the less 'gifted' children with subject offerings that would have some practical application in later life, as well as making their experience of school more enjoyable and less demanding. Thus, for example, in many schools it became common practice to 'stream' the pupils, separating the more 'academically gifted' students from the 'less able'; providing the former with a curriculum aimed specifically at university entry, particularly in the science subjects, and giving the latter a more 'comprehensive' education based on subjects that were often considered 'soft options' and less intellectually demanding. In New South Wales, the Wyndham scheme had brought about a thorough review of secondary education along these lines, and in several States a variety of alternative schools grew up, which attempted to meet the real needs of students, but as a result, often became the final refuge of 'rejects' from the more conventional schools. Divisions between academic and practical subjects, and between 'gifted' and 'at risk' students, were much more entrenched within Australian education than the reformers had judged.

Education as achievement

The thinking behind many of the special programmes devised for American blacks was based on a new approach to the inequality question. Programmes such as Headstart were specifically designed to tackle problems of motivation and performance. Instead of assuming that 'disadvantaged' groups in society did not need, or were incapable of, a high degree of education, these programmes assumed that inequality was largely a question of inadequate motivation and performance resulting from the poor physical and social conditions in which the pupils normally lived and studied. It was argued that by removing them to a different and better environment, the motivational and performance shortcomings could be supplemented. In short, inequality was a matter of environment and the solution was to provide the disadvantaged groups with the kind of conditions that would set them on the path to academic achievement.

In their own way, the educational developments of the Menzies era in Australia were based on a similar philosophy. The conscious effort to make Australia into one of the highly developed nations in the world carried with it the need for a wider and higher range of expertise in many walks of life. Educational achievement was positively encouraged, and Commonwealth grants to schools, scholarships and expansion of universities became the stimulants to motivation and performance. Mere training in basic skills for the masses was no longer enough. The development of a middle class society demanded an increase of social mobility and expansion of tertiary industry, which in turn called for a raising of educational ambitions.

This approach to educational provision helped to modify the class distribution of education, and has lessened the degree to which disadvantaged groups were excluded from academic achievement. At the same time, the underlying assumption was one of individual learning and progress. Particular students who either showed promise or interest, or whose families saw education as a 'way out' for their children, were encouraged and selected to compete academically against the successful from the more privileged schools; they were pointed to as 'proof' that working class youth, or migrants, or girls, were just as capable of educational success as were youth from other more 'advantaged' backgrounds. 'Remedial education' became an important priority in a number of schools and a source of supplementary funding for expanding both the facilities and resources of disadvantaged schools. 'Withdrawal rooms' for working with individual students became incorporated into the design of new schools, and a variety of educational 'packages' or learning programmes became available for use with individual students to monitor progress in basic skills and improve achievement levels. Within some government schools, teachers who had themselves come from working class families devoted considerable time and effort to assisting particular students who seemed more able to cope with the academic curriculum, and either encouraged them to aim at university entrance or else tutored them for scholarships which would gain them entry to a more selective private or government school which could almost 'guarantee' them such entrance.

As studies in Australia and the United States have shown,[1] structured

inequality persists. Worse still, the experience of inequality was accentuated because the concentration on individualised achievement reinforced the gap between aspiration and achievement for those who were left behind the few who managed to succeed.

Education as welfare

Some teachers saw the shift to a needs-basis approach to education as a counterpart to the increased emphasis on social welfare in the early 1970s. The Schools Commission definition of need in terms of the provision of 'resources' clearly encouraged this view. As it stood it represented a clear effort to redress the balance in favour of disadvantaged schools in order to raise them to what might be judged to be an acceptable standard. In addition, by encouraging innovation, this approach could counteract the narrow emphasis on a particular type of achievement as the primary educational criterion.

This approach certainly was a conscious effort to face the problem of inequality. It also provided much needed resources to schools that had been badly deprived and, at the same time, also provided resources for new initiatives. It was for these reasons that the Labor Government received strong support from members of the teaching profession throughout Australia in the 1970s.

Nevertheless, welfare as such is no solution to inequality. In many ways, the history of the Catholic system in Australia has been based on the welfare approach. The Catholic bishops set out quite deliberately to find the money and human resources needed to 'better the lot' of a largely illiterate working class minority group. Their main reasons, of course, were religious rather than educational, but, in its basic operation, it was a welfare system. The outcome is of interest here because the distribution of resources produced an elite sector, which took full advantage of the support to promote educational achievement, and a parochial sector, which used its resources for training pupils in basic skills! In short, the history of the Catholic system highlights a basic feature of any welfare programme; it is not the provision of aid or resources that counts, but rather the way in which the aid is used.

Admittedly, the welfare approach adopted in a number of government schools, particularly in Victoria, drew upon the more progressive educational theories and practices developed in other countries. Rather than promoting either the mental/manual distinction or individualised learning, greater emphasis was given to humanising the school environment on the assumption that inequalities could be overcome if the teacher/student relationships were more supportive and friendly, and if schools were creative and inspiring places in which to learn. The learning was more child-centred and less competitive, with the underlying assumption that co-operation in progressive programmes would make a decisive difference.

At their best, the alternative schools that were established during this period went a considerable way towards proving this assumption, and they also exerted some influence on the organisation of more conventional schools, both in their approach to the curriculum and

relationships between teachers and students. Government funds were used to improve facilities and buy new equipment, ranging from study kits and video-packs, to science equipment and language laboratories. Many schools particularly at the primary level experimented with 'the open classroom' and excursions, and other 'extra-curricula' activities became important aspects of schooling. In general, teaching became a less harsh but even more demanding profession.

Despite the efforts made in each of these three approaches, they have a common weakness. They address the consequences, but not the pre-existing conditions of inequality. Educational disadvantage still persists.

This failure is important because a view of the teacher as 'an agent of change' was very much part of the Education as Welfare approach and high hopes had been held about its potential for radically altering the outcomes, and not just the satisfaction of schooling. Among teachers, one outcome of the movement against the Vietnam War was a questioning of the nature of the society, and the hope that different educational practices would lead to 'a better society'. Considerable effort was made to modify the 'culture' of the school, but little effort was made to understand and build on the culture of the students.

Because solutions were imposed from outside, there was an inevitable sense of paternalism towards the 'disadvantaged' groups and growing disillusionment about the prospects for change. Some programmes in working class schools have taken working class perspectives seriously and used the experiences of their students as the basis for curricula which link together critical and practical abilities. Attempts have also been made in educational programmes involving migrants and Aborigines to devise curricula based on cultural expression and self-determination. At present they are only exceptions. Programmes like these and the approach they illustrate are discussed in Chapter 7.

The dilemmas of the 1970s

These approaches to schooling occurred in a context of increasing emphasis on tertiary education as the desired outcome. The Murray and Martin Committees together established the basic structure of tertiary education in its contemporary form in Australia. They encouraged the rapid post-war development and expansion within the university, and then the college sectors, precisely because they saw education as a necessary element of economic growth. On the one hand, there was a need to ensure the availability of skilled and professional labour as manufacturing industry grew, the services sector became established and mining exploration showed some prospects. On the other, as Australia entered a period of increasing prosperity, the expectations of Australian people for access to educational opportunity for themselves and especially their children, grew sharply, as a 'good education' became the key to social mobility. The establishment of the colleges sector was part of an attempt to meet these objectives 'on the cheap'. By clearly locating colleges in an inferior relationship to universities, with more emphasis on vocationally specific programmes and little emphasis on research, their cost per student would be lower, and their output could be directly related to economic priorities.

This separation of objectives reflected the extension to the tertiary level of deep-seated assumptions which have permeated all Australian education, about the nature of ability in students and the needs of the workforce. The universities were to be concerned with scholarship and the discovery of new knowledge, while the colleges provided the educated labour force who could use it.

Partly because the premise of this hierarchy of abilities is false, the actual differences in the work of the two sectors became increasingly blurred. In universities, a number of faculties are concerned with training for specific occupations, ranging from the prestigious professions of medicine, law, dentistry, veterinary science, engineering and architecture, to education and social welfare. In many cases, the links with the profession and with industry are even more developed than in the colleges sector. On the other hand, since the late sixties, there have been humanities and creative arts courses in colleges which do not lead to particular occupations, but are clearly a kind of general education.

This pattern of development is hardly surprising. It demonstrates the errors in the original assumptions underlying the two sectors, as well as a misunderstanding of the political and social pressures associated with educational decision-making in the economically benign climate of the 1960s and 1970s. Because such pressures existed, education became a major issue of public debate. The expansion of the educational provisions in the post-war period, and the attempts made from the mid-1960s onwards to overcome inequalities in education, led to a series of debates over educational policy in the 1970s, which pointed to a latent conflict within Australian society over the nature and purpose of education—a conflict that is directly related to the reversals in educational policy that were implemented by the Liberal Government from the mid-1970s.

To a large degree, the latent conflict was uncovered by the issue of inequality. The most trenchant expression of it emerged in the Poverty and Education Report published in 1976. The extensive research which formed the body of that report led its authors to the inevitable conclusion that:

> People who are poor and disadvantaged are victims of a societal confidence trick. They have been encouraged to believe that a major goal of schooling is to increase equality while, in reality, schools reflect society's intention to main tain the present unequal distribution of status and power. Because the myth of equal opportunity has been so widely accepted by Australians, the nature of unequal outcomes has been largely ignored. Thus, failure to succeed in the competition is generally viewed as being the fault of the individual rather than as the inevitable way our society is structured. (Poverty Commission, 1976: 231).

The note of surprise and concern evident in this conclusion reflects a dashed assumption that social inequality could in fact be overcome by means of educational reform as if educational policy and practice could somehow or other be carried on independently of the class structure of society.

As Galbraith and others have shown,[2] the promotion of the 'knowledge industry' by the state has been a decisive factor in the formation of the advanced-capitalist society. By promoting and

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expanding tertiary education, the state provided capitalism with the means for research, innovation, planning, specialised knowledge and improved productivity which made the growth of the post-war period possible. This means that, in fact, tertiary education became important for the very functioning of advanced capitalist society in the sense that it was seen to be a decisive element in productivity.

To achieve this within the framework of democracy, a social price had to be paid. Because the benefits of increased productivity accrued primarily to only one section of the population—the owners of capital—the support of the other sections of the population had to be gained. This was done by making some provision for educational 'opportunity'. Thus, in addition to its productive purpose, tertiary education was also given a motivational purpose—it provided the possibility for social mobility through individual educational effort. There has been, therefore, a latent conflict in the post-war expansion of tertiary education. It has been aimed at the formation of a specialised elite needed for economic development, but also held out as a realistic expectation for a large segment of the population—an expectation tied directly to upward mobility. It reflects a conflict between the class division of labour, and the democratic ideal of equality of opportunity. It has been latent, because attempts to reveal its class basis have always been counteracted by appeals to the notion of 'opportunity'. The real nature of the conflict has always been masked. At the same time, because the expansion of education made the pre-existing inequalities much more obvious, a new phase of change resulted. It represented a deliberate reversal of previous policy and a 'new dogmatism' emerged as the dominant influence on planning.

The reversal of educational policy

As far as educational policy-making is concerned, the early 1980s had more in common with the 1930s than with the 1970s. It would be a mistake, however, to read this as a 'cyclical' phenomenon, or a swing of the pendulum away from the 'excesses' of the Whitlam years. The new dogmatism is not simply a reaction to past events; it is based on a definite conviction about a new role for Australia in the future. Because of this conviction and the changes in the structures of our economy that it entails, a redefinition of the nature and purpose of education is required to bring it into line with the new society that is envisaged. This is not to suggest that some kind of master plan exists, but rather that there is a convergence between a range of educational policies and the economic demands implied in the process of structural change.

Certain Liberals, successive Ministers for Education, and employer groups, such as the Victorian Employers Federation, the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise Australia, have all on various occasions laid the blame for youth unemployment on the decline in educational standards within Australian schools. They have emphasised the need to bring school curricula into line with the demands of the workplace, advocated a national inquiry into educational standards, and the development of a core curriculum of basic skills, and even attempted to invade State rights over education, by tying their educational allocations to Federally-determined

transition education programmes. At the same time, the issues of accountability and cost have been used to implement drastic cutbacks in the teaching profession and in the teacher-training institutions. There has also been a significant shift in Commonwealth funding in favour of private schools at the expense of government schools.

The first and main difference between this line of policy and that of the 1930s lies in the attitude adopted towards the school-work transition. In the 1930s, similar cutbacks were implemented, but on the grounds that, since secondary education was a privilege rather than a right, and since the unemployment rate was so high, the state was wasting its money providing young people with an extended education which would be 'useless to them in the battle for life' (Hyams and Bessant, 1974: 136). Recently, despite high youth unemployment the emphasis shifted to the instrumental value of schooling for developing appropriate skills and inculcating correct attitudes in the workforce of the future.

Secondly, employer groups are increasingly concerned about the attitudes and lifestyles of the younger generation of Australians. The post-war economic expansion and the images and lifestyles encouraged by the commercialisation of youth culture have, in their view, given young people false expectations concerning personal fulfilment and 'rewarding' work. Support at the cultural level for high aspirations and personal fulfilment suited the process of economic change encouraged in the post-war period of urban and industrial expansion, but the recent restructuring in terms of investment and resource development required reduced expectations for most Australian youth in the 1980s.

Thirdly, there is a direct link between the recent reversal of educational policy and the restructuring of the Australian workforce. The shift towards the capital-intensive extractive industries makes the ready supply of a large number of qualified personnel unnecessary. The effects of inflation and the growth of the national deficit make further cutbacks in educational expenditure appealing. The gains for investment capital no longer lie in the manufacturing sector in Australia; reduction of labour costs makes 'off-shore' production in Third World nations preferable (already Australian companies are following the multinationals in setting up factories in Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines); world-wide problems of over-production are causing the United States and our other economic 'partners' to encourage Australia to become an export market rather than a competitor. The impact of this type of change on the Australian workforce is obvious. Not only teachers, but owners and workers in small businesses, middle-line executives, clerks, secretarial and support staff are likely to be affected by a tightening of the job market, particularly in the south-eastern states where the major middle-class gains of the post-war era were made.

This change also explains the development of transition education programmes and technical and further education (TAFE). Their growth encourages 'specialisation' and 'expertise' to be defined in a much more narrowly vocational sense. The content of courses can also be directly determined by the 'job-skills' that employers consider important for the restructured workforce. It will promote a piecemeal approach to education, allowing for greater 'flexibility' dictated by fluctuations in the job market, and counteract any tendency tertiary

institutions may lay claim to as critical enclaves of influence on the coming generation. The emphasis on transition education and TAFE is a redefinition of post-secondary education as instrumental, rather than normative.

Along with the shift in economic priorities there is a concomitant reorganisation of work tasks around computerised machinery. Word-processors, new cash registers, and mini-computers are already leading to retrenchments in white-collar occupations at the secretarial and clerical level, the deskilling of the jobs that still remain because of standardisation and recording of information suited to computer use, and the replacement of permanent trained staff with casual and part-time workers. Computer-based decision-making, planning, data analysis and ordering implies that future productivity will be far less dependent on the development of highly qualified staff. Educational expansion is no longer an imperative of economic growth.

Review of direction

Because significant changes are already occurring at an economic level which allow for markedly lower levels of education within the workforce, the connection between education, training and employment became an explicit concern of the Liberal Government. The Williams Inquiry established in 1976, published its report early in 1979, and provided a significant base for the restructuring of tertiary education. Its importance lay not so much in the details of strategy which it suggested, but in its legitimation of particular policies for tertiary education in Australia. It must be considered along with the Crawford Report (1979) on manufacturing industry, as both reports were crucial to Liberal Government policies. They both identified the kinds of general accommodations that the government might seek to promote, thus assisting basic changes in the role of the Australian economy within a new international division of production.

In recent years, there has been a great deal of confused and inconclusive discussion of the implications for the Australian economy and society of its greater integration into the world capitalist system with its international division of labour. The intent of Williams was to promote the view of education that would be much more closely related to the needs of the labour market (and consequently, employers), as this integration develops. The Williams Report included a significant discussion on the Australian economy, and the influence of technology, and recommendations about the future funding of education which link it directly with the Gross Domestic Product for at least the next twenty years.

The Report advocated a four-tiered hierarchy: the universities geared to the elite professional; the colleges, with restricted intakes for vocational and practical pursuits; a network of regional colleges, offering courses at both advanced and technical level; and technical and further education colleges, with specific short-term, inexpensive courses, which would also make some provision for the unemployed. It is the TAFE level which is suggested for expansion, under the control of employers, but with state funding. The Report is preoccupied with the

measurement of performance, with streaming, and with credentialling. It is remarkable for its failure to observe even a few of the conclusions of the Poverty Commission Report on education which demonstrates quite clearly the structural inequality inherent in schooling, and despite the evidence, Williams blithely accepts the same questionable assumptions referred to earlier regarding 'intellectual' and 'practical' abilities.[3]

When the Williams Report was released, the decision-making for the 1979-81 Triennium was already completed. In 1980-81 there was a further national inquiry into teacher education, the Auchmuty Inquiry. Comments by the then Minister for Education, that Australia was becoming an 'over-educated' nation, despite its comparative position with other OECD countries, began to hint at the Government's views. However, when the Parliamentary Statement on the Review of Commonwealth Functions (the Razor Gang) was proclaimed, most Australian educators were unprepared.

In the Review of Commonwealth Functions the Federal commitment to funding tertiary education remained constant, with slight re-allocation from universities and higher education towards technical and further education. In reference to its previously expressed concern at the 'proliferation' of separate higher education institutes, the Government announced a major rationalisation and re-allocation of resources in higher education. The main features of this were to be the amalgamation or incorporation of 30 teacher education colleges into multi-purpose or multi-campus colleges (or integration with universities), and the re-allocation of resources from teacher education and the liberal arts, to the technologies and business studies. In some cases, engineering schools were also to be consolidated.[4]

The amalgamations were to ensure that real savings occurred, and yet no evidence was given to indicate how such savings might be achieved. In the report of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for the 1982-84 Triennium, it is clear that the overriding concern is with the distribution of resources in a manner which is dependent on particular economic needs, rather than educational rationale. Nowhere is there any substantial consideration of educational issues and the longer term implications of these decisions. This can be seen particularly in the TEC discussion of policy in regard to teacher education. In Volume 1, the TEC firstly comments that:

> In providing advice to the Minister on the Auchmuty Report[5], the Commission made the following major points:
>
> a number of the Report's recommendations had major implications for the supply and demand for teachers. If implemented the Recommendations would result in levels of enrolments in pre-service and post-experience teacher education higher than would otherwise be the case. The Commission is therefore concerned that the Report may encourage state authorities and other interested parties to plead for delay in implementing plans for the reallocation of resources in higher education from teacher education to such fields as commerce, computing, applied science and technology. The Committee does not believe that any such delay can be justified even if the Recommendations of the Report are adopted.
>
> The Commission naturally supports the general thrust of the Report that the

quality of the teacher workforce should be improved, as far as in-service courses are concerned there has already been a substantial effort by institutions of higher education to provide courses to up-grade the qualifications of the teacher workforce ...

The Commission is conscious of the funding constraints that have been imposed on higher education over the past five years and questions whether additional funds for teacher education on the scale proposed by the Committee should have priority over the other requirements of higher education. (TEC Report, 1981: Vol 1, 24)

In this way, a two-year major investigation, the National Inquiry into Teacher Education, is dismissed in a few paragraphs with pious support for the thrust of the Inquiry, but a total unwillingness to devote any resources to improving the quality of teacher education. This refusal to invest resources in the improvement of quality is important because it suggests that the Commission's arguments about the need to shift resources from teacher education because of over-supply, and indeed the whole discussion about teacher education, is based on a fiscal rather than an educational rationale. Indeed, it would not be too strong to say that there is no educational policy in the Tertiary Education Commission's Report, but only a desperate scramble to reduce, shift and save dollars.

This is no mere coincidence. It shows the extent to which the stated intentions of the Liberal Government to impose changes on educational institutions in Australia were acceded to by the Commission, despite detailed evidence submitted to it on the continuing needs of schools and tertiary colleges. Submissions from both the Schools Commission and the Auchmuty Inquiry into teacher education warned of the strains that continual cutbacks would place on public education institutions, and presented clear educational reasons for renewed support. It seems extraordinary that while all the evidence pointed to public concern about the effectiveness of public education, and the need to improve it, and while the levels of educational attainment compared very unfavourably with those of other western nations, the main thrust of Federal Government policy was to impose restrictions rather than provide support. To understand the meaning of this policy, and its implications for the future livelihood of Australian youth, it is essential to grasp the seriousness of the economic crisis confronting the Government at the time. An extensive process of change in economic structures on a world-wide level was taking place which was to have a significant impact on the Australian economy and the subsequent actions of the Liberal Government.

Notes

1 The US material is developed in P. Jencks (1972) *Inequality* and S. Bowles and H. Gintis (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America*. The Australian material is presented in the various reports of the Schools Commission (eg *Schools in Australia*) and other books such as D. Edgar (1980) *Introduction to Australian Society*, and R. W. Connell et al. (1982) *Making the Difference*.

2 J. K. Galbraith (1967) *The New Industrial State;* P. Drucker (1969) *The Age of Discontinuity;* J. Habermans (1975) *Legitimation Crisis*.

3 See the chapter on Schools, Williams Report, *op cit*, chapter 4.
4 See the statement by the Minister for Education, W. Fife, on *Commonwealth Education Policy and Financial Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commission*, House of Representatives, Hansard, 4 June 1981.
5 *Report of the National Inquiry into Teacher Education* (Auchmuty Report), Canberra, 1980.

4

Social policy and educational reform

L. E. Foster

Source: L. E. Foster, *Australian Education: A Sociological Perspective*, Prentice-Hall of Australia, Sydney, 1981, pp. 343-67.

Chapters 2-11 have been concerned with outlining in sociological terms the basic structures and functions of the institution of education in Australia. The picture which has emerged is of a number of separate, highly complex education systems, both State and non-State, which are closely interlinked with other institutions, such as the family, the economy, and the political system. It may seem to us that the size and complexity of the educational institution would engender a considerable inertia that would inhibit both planned and unplanned change. We have discerned in our study some specific factors which might create resistance to change, let alone reform. These include: a high degree of administrative centralization, professionalization and unionization of teachers, the low level of community participation in school (and, more generally, educational) politics, excessive reliance on credentials, rigidity in bureaucratic organization, and biases on class, sex, ethnic, or racial grounds. Despite these factors, however, change occurs. It is obviously as endemic to this particular institution as to any other part of the social system. Planning cannot reduce completely the uncertainty that accompanies change, but it does allow some degree of control over the nature and direction of change. We therefore need to round off our discussion of the sociology of Australian education by considering the sort of planning for change that may culminate in educational policy.

There are two aspects to planning. The first is the collection of data and general information needed to obtain an adequate picture of the past and the present. On the basis of this, policy decisions for the future can be made. The second function of planning is concerned with the efficient implementation of the policy decisions. Obviously, this second function leads to the collection of new information which forms the basis of new or revised policy decisions. So, although we will speak of planning and policy as two separate functions, they are really both part of the same process of setting and trying to achieve desired goals.[1]

Change within education, as we noted previously, can originate in response to broader social change. Such external pressures may force change upon unprepared educational systems, and a minimum of actual planning may be possible given the

'crisis' nature of the situation. However, not all change is so rapid, or unexpected, and careful planning can be carried out to develop particular educational policies that prepare for, rather than respond to, external change. We might make similar points about pressures for change that arise from within educational systems. The final point is, of course, that planning must try to cope with a great many external and internal pressures that may be affecting one another in complex ways.

We shall seek to give in this chapter some examples of policies which illustrate these types of changes. There are some limitations on that goal:

1. For our purposes here we cannot take account of *micro-level* change, that is, changes brought about within a single school or by a single teacher.
2. The role of educational reform as part of a strategy of general social change is a question of continuing interest and concern for Western countries. Those people who criticize the slowness or the piecemeal nature of educational change in the West often suggest that valuable lessons could be gained by examining the nature of educational reform in 'revolutionary' countries, such as Russia, China or Cuba.[2] One feature of the new relationship established between Australia and China has been the numerous visits of Australian teachers and academics anxious to observe the educational system of that country. Because of the limitations of space, however, we shall not be considering educational change which has resulted from revolutionary change in a whole society. We shall confine any comparisons we make to Western industrialized nations.
3. We cannot investigate or assess here the effectiveness of change or innovations within school systems. Note that all innovation is part of social change, but all change is *not* innovation. Change may go on hidden from view in any society and could be described as accidental or, more technically, as a result of socio-cultural drift. However, innovation is generally held to possess features including the following: consciously directed, rational and planned. Therefore, we shall concentrate on reviewing the nature of different policies and their anticipated or expected consequences or innovations.

Additive and Reformative Change

A useful distinction has been made by Carlton, Colley and MacKinnon between additive and reformative (innovative) types of change.[3] *Additive* changes are minor adjustments that result from day-to-day pressures within schools or the larger educational system. A clear example of additive change has occurred in the case of single-purpose colleges of advanced education that were concerned with teacher education. Pressure mounted within governments and education departments during the late 1970s to reduce the number of pre-service trainees in colleges. Pressure was therefore brought to bear upon the colleges themselves to reduce their intakes of new students of this type. Faced with drastic cuts in their funding, some colleges diversified into programmes that enabled them to offer courses to teachers already qualified. They added diploma programmes and non-credit courses in migrant education, special education, school administration, and so on. By increasing the range of their offerings, these colleges increased their student numbers and thus reduced the severity of their overall funding cut-backs.

Reformative changes, on the other hand, are attempts to alter the basic structure of an education system in a planned way in order to achieve desired goals. A hypothetical example of reformative change would be the development of an organized system of adult education which had different goals and approaches from current post-secondary education. The reorganization of secondary education in the decades since World War 2 should be a more concrete example of reformative change. Such change attempted to remove the stratified system of secondary education with the introduction of co-educational schools. Many of these schools developed core curricula for all students, thereby laying the groundwork for the achievement of the slogan 'secondary education for all'.

However, the key insight to emerge from the last chapter was that the forces of control and change are locked in a continual struggle in capitalist society. Those who hold power try to maintain the social relationships that give them that power. Those who are relatively powerless try to redistribute the power to their benefit. The entrenched interests of the powerful act as forces for social control to contain this challenge. They are aided in this by their ideology and by their creation of false consciousness in others. Because of these powerful forces working one against the other, the reformative aspect of secondary reorganization has not been attained. The dual system of 'public' and 'private' education has entrenched the stratification of types of schools and school curricula.

Remember also that Apple's view was that the hegemony of the capitalist mode of thought, through its control of meaning, enables cultural control to act as an important force for the reproduction of social relations. The educational system is a central mechanism for the transmission of cultural control, because it is the acknowledged purveyor of the legitimate knowledge (facts, skills, even hopes and fears, and ways of evaluating all of these) which we, as citizens, are expected to 'know'. In effect, the cultural apparatus and the economic apparatus influence each other. Hence, to have a true understanding of our society, we must discover who controls not only economic capital, but also cultural capital.

Such a perspective should lead us to investigate such questions as:

- Who makes the policy that affects directly or indirectly what goes on in schools?
- What is its nature?
- What does it hope to achieve?
- Why was it proposed at the time that it was?
- What was *not* made the subject of the policy?

Speaking generally, we want to discover which educational *means* to which agreed upon *goals* have been suggested in the significant educational policies in Australia since 1945. This seems to be a simple task of getting the *facts* on important educational policies. However, we must realize that upon inquiring into the aims and methods of policies concerned with educational equality (or the reduction of inequality), we are dealing with political issues involving fundamental questions and interests. We must be careful to distinguish factual data and objective relationships from value judgements and ideological assumptions stemming from entrenched class or power interests. So we must firstly discern the facts, issues, and goals of various policy proposals, and then we must try to determine for what political, economic and

social reasons certain policies have emerged at certain times and in response to certain conditions.[4]

In the first section of this chapter, then, we will review some aspects of social policies that have had a particular impact on education in England, the United States, and Canada. We must limit our discussion to the period following World War 2, although we should remember that some policies have a long tradition in the social history of those countries. Such a review should help us to situate the Australian scene in a broader context. This is in line with the point made in Chapter 1 that a sociological perspective should help us to develop a 'cosmopolitan' consciousness.[5] In addition we should use what Berger called the 'debunking' perspective to critically examine what we are *told* is happening in our society.[6] We must have an understanding of both the official rhetoric *and* the reality of our everyday life.

In the second part of the chapter we shall focus on policy and educational change within Australia. The major and evolving role of the Federal government in educational planning and policy will form the third part of the chapter, and a detailed examination of two specific Federal policies will constitute the fourth.

The general approach that we have described might be called a framework of the *politics of educational knowledge*.[7] For some sociologists, all educational issues have a political dimension.[8] They would interpret teaching methods and goals, conceptions of curricula, assessment procedures, career counselling, disciplinary policies, bureaucratic and hierarchical methods of organization, etc. — in short, all the aspects of school and schooling that we have explored so far — in terms of the basic political orientation of the parties involved. All pressures for control or change might be examined in this type of framework. Educational policy then, embodying as it does fundamental social assumptions and values, is one part of the wider battleground on which social, political and economic issues are fought.

The politics of educational knowledge approach is part of what has been called the 'new' sociology of education. The 'new' emphasis is primarily on 'looking inside' classrooms to find out how teachers and students make sense of the classroom world and how educational reality is constructed by the interaction of individuals. There is a recognition, however, of the influence that structures and ideologies from the external social system have on the social system of the school and individual classrooms. In particular there is a recognition that the practices which keep society going and which mask the ideological aspects of what is generally considered to be legitimate knowledge are a result of the type of society (in our case, capitalist) in which the schools are embedded. Therefore, what are considered to be legitimate educational practices and legitimate educational knowledge are subject to the control of those in power in the wider society.

Our discussion in the remainder of the chapter therefore will lead us to try to (1) identify *general trends in educational policy* in capitalist countries, including Australia, in order to gain an understanding of the wider political context of schooling, (2) examine the *interests* of a particular power group in educational policy-making — the Federal government — in order to provide the immediate political context for Australian educational policy making, and (3) examine two specific policies in order to gain some insight into the assumptions concerning educational knowledge they embody.

Trends in Educational Change in Other Western Countries

A distinctive feature in many Western countries in the decades since World War 2 has been the development and attempted implementation of policies informed by the view that education can compensate for educational inequality. However, there have been problems of both social and political feasibility with such policies. Difficulties in the social sphere have arisen in defining the boundaries (and accepted relationships) between education and other parts of the society such as the family, ethnic groups, and local communities which also carry out educative functions. Difficulties in the political sphere arise from the need for the achievement of a particular social design through education to be backed by an appropriate political structure and the will of the political leadership. Political support must go beyond verbal commitment to the allocation of resources.

In Halsey's view,[9] there have been three broad types of educational policy in Western countries since World War 2. Each of these has been oriented to a particular definition of educational equality. They are:

- Defining equality in terms of national efficiency and equality of access to education.
- Defining equality as equality of achievement or outcome
- Seeking equality through a reappraisal of the functions of education.

We shall examine some of the features and consequences of these types of policies.

Equality of Educational Opportunity

The literature concerned with the use of educational policy as a means to achieve greater equality in society in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia have shown remarkable similarities. Their major themes have been *efficiency* and *equality*.

Efficiency has been the hallmark of the technologically sophisticated Western countries in the twentieth century. To be efficient has, in fact, been equated with being modern or 'developed'. Thus, efficiency has been seen as a national goal, and education has been considered to be one of the major mechanisms for its achievement. Equality in the sense of equity or justice for all has become linked with efficiency both because of education's role in boosting life-chances and because the wastage of human potential through lack of education was regarded as inefficiency that inhibited 'progress'. Therefore, sociological writers speak of the efficiency–equality nexus. One particular expression of this definition of equality has been seen in attempts to expand educational opportunity. These were intended to provide easier access to education for larger sections of the population. Because such a policy is a democratic reform, being an attempt to eradicate privilege, it has been termed 'liberal'.

Unfortunately, confusion over the definitions of these themes as well as debate about the best means to achieve them has, in Halsey's view, led to policies designed to create and maintain a meritocracy for which there is no consensus of approval. For example, the setting up of three types of secondary schools in Britain through the

Education Act of 1944 sought to provide an appropriate (and for some, a 'better') education for students who were perceived as either academically minded, technically oriented, or requiring a practical and general education. The consequence of the tripartite system (as it came to be known) was the establishment of a hierarchy of schools ensuring *less* access to higher education for some and better jobs for those from the advantaged social classes. The policy took on a meritocratic purpose which was not intended, at least overtly, by those who framed it.

Policies to achieve efficiency and equality have, of course, marked the rise of mass schooling in those countries (as in Australia), but particular expressions of the efficiency–equality nexus have appeared in the past thirty years. Recall from Chapter 3 that Connell has examined the accepted goals of Australian education through his discussion of its traditions and myths. While Connell's discussion did not specifically focus on the efficiency–equality nexus, it is highly relevant to that theme. He argued that the academic, piecemeal, prudential and administering traditions represent a valid explanation of the development of Australian education. The traditions focused on the goal of efficiency defined as the control of administration and expenditure and control of the experience of curriculum provided for the children of different social groups in Australia. That there was a distinction made between the 'academically able' and the 'less able' is indicative that the goal of efficiency was prized above the goal of equality. In effect, the nexus between the two has led, indirectly, to a meritocratic policy. The inability of such a policy to lead to general equality was reflected in Connell's description of the goal of efficiency in Australian education as a myth. Even in the commonsense conception of the term efficiency, Australian education has not been efficient, because it has failed to demonstrate that it has achieved the accepted aims of 'individual opportunity', 'citizenship' and 'thoroughness'.

The goal of equality of educational opportunity or, to put it another way, equality of access to schooling for all (especially to the more advanced stages of the schooling), irrespective of sex, social class origin, religion, and ethnic group membership, was the dominant policy up to the end of the 1950s in Britain, the U.S. and Canada. (The period was more extended in Australia, lasting into the 1960s.) Measures employed to achieve this goal included: (1) the provision of scholarships to reward academic merit at all levels of schooling, (2) the establishment of a longer period of education for all by raising the statutory leaving age, (3) the expansion of facilities for higher education, (4) the 'democratization' of curricula, and (5) the provision of alternatives to conventional schooling. Once linked, however, with the notion of national *efficiency*, which is a concomitant of rapid industrialization, the goal of equality of opportunity was transformed implicitly into the goal of meritocracy. Another way of describing this transformation is that the linking of equality with efficiency has served to *control* rather than *change* the distribution of social power.

The *failure* of the so-called 'liberal' policy described above has been noted by many contemporary commentators on Western education. One indication of failure, which was discussed in Chapter 2, has been the observation that in spite of the considerable expansion of educational facilities and increased numbers of students benefiting from this expansion, these measures have not led to any marked change in the social composition of the student body at the upper secondary or tertiary levels of education. The conclusion to be drawn from these facts can be simply stated as follows: claims concerning the power of educational systems to reform societies

which are socially stratified have been excessive. It is the persistence of relative inequality reflected in income and status which is the apparently insoluble problem.

A second, and broader, explanation for the failure of the 'liberal' education policy has been that 'education is the waste-paper basket of social policy'.[10] Where solutions to social problems are uncertain or are seen as 'too hard', the problems are redefined as 'educational' and diverted to the education system to solve. As formal education or schooling affects almost the entire population in some way, the sheer visibility of the education system makes it an obvious 'scapegoat' to relieve the pressure on other institutions in society. You will recall from Chapter 5 that the family has also been a favourite scapegoat to take the blame for the ills of society; formal education, in the reconstructionist optimism of the post-war era, has come to share that 'favoured' position. The failure of 'liberal' policies to equalize educational access, then, may be sheeted home to an inability to see that the major determinants of educational achievement, in its broadest sense, have more to do with social situations, motivation, and family and community support than with teachers, curriculum and formal access to schooling.

Equality of Achievement or Outcome

More recently, the definition of educational equality that stressed equality of access has given way to a new definition that stresses *equality of achievement or outcome*. In other words, a society can be said to exhibit educational equality if the proportions of people from different social groups who are receiving education are similar to their proportions in the general population. In such a case, no class, racial, ethnic, or sexual bias would be operating.

In the United States, the particular strategy for achieving equality of outcome has been the concept of compensatory programmes, supported by programmes of 'bussing', education vouchers, and 'life-long' education.[11]

Compensatory education can appear in many forms. The Headstart Programme is a familiar example. In this programme, pre-school children were given enriched learning experiences in group situations with the aim of compensating for their educationally *deprived* backgrounds particularly with respect to development of language. The 'Sesame Street' television series is an illustration of the experiential language orientation of the Headstart Programme.

Bussing programmes transported students from deprived areas to areas with better-equipped and better-staffed schools. It was a controversial concept which was used, in a sense, to overcome the history of educational inequality which had resulted in an unequal distribution of resources between communities. Although seen by many as a programme of rapid racial integration, it also had the broader goal of equalizing educational opportunity in order to overcome discrimination and to promote racial integration in the longer term.

Voucher schemes can appear in a number of forms, but the principle underlying all of them is the promotion of diversity and competition in the educational marketplace. Public funds are made available to parents as vouchers which entitle the bearer to pay fees for tuition in any approved school within a certain area. This is in contrast to the usual organization of public education in which residential areas are divided into zones, students attend the school in their zone, and education is 'free'.

The concept of life-long education tries to erode the assumption that formal

education is to be experienced and completed during the first twenty or so years of life. Proponents of life-long education seek the restructuring of education so that it is seen to be a continuous process that can be experienced at any stage of the life-cycle.

Policy-making in Australian education has not firmly committed public education systems to any of these trends in American education. There has been some experimentation with Headstart-type programmes for Aboriginal children. Bussing is used in Australia, although the reasons for its use differ somewhat from those in the United States. Bussing has been available for a long time in country areas to enable students to attend day-schools in towns. Voucher schemes have been discussed at official and at community level but little action has been taken. The per capita payments made by the Federal government since the early 1970s (which might be thought of as a type of voucher scheme) are generally paid to schools rather than directly to parents. They act as a school subsidy rather than as a means for parents to 'buy' the type of education they wish for their children. They do not make the education systems significantly more open or competitive. The concept of life-long education has been broached in public discussions in Australia. In a sense, the provision for early leaving schemes and mature-age entrance arrangements for university education represent some acceptance of the ideal of life-long education. However, emphasis on youth education remains predominant in Australia. Neither in the United States nor in Australia is there any strong evidence that these measures have achieved equality of educational outcome.

In Great Britain, significant features of this second phase of educational policy have been the establishment of comprehensive schools and certain types of compensatory programmes. The Plowden Report defined education priority areas (EPAs) as part of this programme. The basis of the EPA scheme was the recognition of the close correlation between high social deprivation (neighbourhood and home), poor social conditions, lack of parental involvement, and low educational attainment.[12]

The concept of the comprehensive school in Great Britain tried to reduce the stratification of schools, particularly the disparity between the academic grammar schools and the secondary modern schools, which catered for the less able students. The comprehensive school was to combine both types of school and the education they provided in one school was to be open to all the students in a particular region. The re-organization of secondary education in the Australian States in the 1960s and the 1970s was based on a similar policy. One consequence has been, however, that divisions *within* schools have tended to arise similar to those which previously existed *between* schools. The distribution of outcomes does not appear to have been significantly changed by a redesignation of schools and a redistribution of school population.

Canada. Because of its different social structure, Canada has tried to achieve equality of outcome through support for multicultural education within a bilingual framework and through positive discrimination for indigenous peoples: the Inuit people and the Indians.[13] Although it is a bilingual, bicultural country, Canada has in the past been dominated by the Anglophone section of the population. Following a Royal Commission on bilingualism and biculturalism in the 1960s, the concept of 'bilingualism for all' was adopted. This was seen as a means of equalizing the educational and employment opportunities for the Anglophone and Francophone sections of the population. There is little evidence as yet that this goal has been achieved.

Canada's population in fact contains many other minority groups, for example, Ukrainians, Italians and Asians. The recognition of Canada's bilingual status led other groups to agitate for recognition of their languages and cultures in the education system and in other social institutions. As a result, a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework was introduced in the 1970s. Again, there is no strong evidence that the vertical stratification of ethnic groups based on power and status has shifted in favour of groups of ethnic background other than Anglo-Canadian. The positive discrimination shown towards the Inuit and Indian peoples in Canada has improved their educational conditions, but these groups still remain at the bottom of the social ladder.

Australia differs from Canada in that it has been dominated by one linguistic majority. Although our population is both multilingual and multicultural, there is no one major group to compete with the Anglo-majority as there is in Canada. Very recent educational policy has tended to accept multicultural education. However, this concept is as yet ill-defined, and it has by no means achieved the standing of a national policy. We have noted in previous chapters that the persistence of stratification in Australian society is related, at least in part, to ethnic and racial discrimination. It is too early to judge whether the implementation of a multicultural educational policy will have any effect on existing social stratification.

The difficulties involved in bringing policies for equalizing educational outcomes to fruition have been complicated by external factors such as inflation and youth unemployment, brought about partially by the technological revolution (including the advent of the micro-processor and the silicon chip). While these factors obviously have considerable effect, our survey of theories of social and cultural reproduction in the previous chapter should have alerted us to look 'behind the facade' of what may be presented to us as the 'logical' solution to a problem. The forces that constrain the achievement of equality of educational outcomes are more enduring and deeply embedded than the relatively superficial features of the new technology.

The Reappraisal of Educational Functions

The policies and programmes designed to achieve equality of educational outcomes have not been totally successful. Theories have been offered to explain the failure, but they have achieved no breakthrough. This has led to the third type of educational policy in recent times. It is basically a thorough reappraisal of the functions of education in society. We are now back to posing fundamental questions and reappraising priorities. Policy makers concerned with this reappraisal might ask the following questions: Should education concentrate on the minority who will go on to higher education and obtain social rewards? Should it concentrate on the majority who, on the surface, will be led to 'enjoy' school under the rubric of 'self-actualization or self-expression', while they are in fact being coerced to accept their low social position by means of a 'hidden' curriculum? Does the hidden curriculum reinforce social inequality? Should education be part of a wider programme of social reform which could lead to the democratization of local power structures and the diversification of local opportunities for employment? Would such an aim enable society to depend on its schools for a supply of young people who have had an education to equip them for political and social responsibility, especially at the community level? These are obviously questions relating to a 'new' or radical form of educational policy.

One expression of this new thinking in policy can be found in Michael Apple's optimism that the forces for radical change (in the sense of, for example, the raised consciousness of oppressed groups) in a society like the United States may enable a shift 'beyond reproduction'. He considers that those struggles which affect day-to-day issues should not be seen as insignificant, but as a way of seizing opportunities for political education and for testing theories in a practical way.[14] A second expression is the orientation within the sociology of education towards the politics of school knowledge. Those with an interest in this field are dissatisfied with definitions of schooling and favour a redefinition of the type of experiences that are labelled 'educational'. Their perspective includes not only a critique of existing educational practices but also development of possible strategies for change. The most crucial aspect is that both of these processes are undertaken with an awareness that actions which sustain social structures and also conceal the ideological dimensions of 'legitimate' knowledge from public view are not only those pertinent to schooling. Thus, educational practices are part of the wider context of society itself.[15] This echoes the point made in Chapter 10, that consciousness, social action and social structure at the societal level must *all* be taken into account when examining the nature of educational policy and its consequences for schools and their clients.

We shall seek reflections of these three changing emphases in policy making as we explore policy and planning for education in Australia.

The Australian Context

Previous chapters have already described how many events during the decades since World War 2 have exerted pressure on all Australian institutions. All of these pressures, whether ideological or created by material circumstances, have had some part to play in the continuing process of control and change in Australian society. Clearly, it is not possible to chart this entire process in detail. We will begin by outlining some of the major trends associated with educational policy and change before looking in greater detail at a few specific examples in the following section. It will be necessary to limit our discussion to policies initiated at the Federal level.[16]

1. The typical pattern of policy implementation in Australian education has been for change to be generated at higher administrative levels and then to be directed down to the other levels of the formal education system. Lateral diffusion of changes may occur subsequently, but there has been no strong tradition of change being initiated at the 'grassroots' level. This pattern stems from many factors such as: strong centralization within the institution of education, low community interest or participation in politics at the local government level, general acceptance by society of an hierarchical division of labour with its accompanying specialization, and acceptance of a definition of equality which allocates resources uniformly rather than differentially according to need. One factor that inhibits the devolution of power and authority is incompetence among those who would consequently assume responsibility for administration. This is in part due to the historical lack of any 'grassroots' participation in local government, as well as the centralization in the administration and control of education. It is not unexpected that policy making and planning have tended to remain with the bureaucracies. Nor is it very surprising that moves such as the revamping of schools' councils have not as yet led to a significant redistribution of control in education.

2. Because of many of the factors mentioned in point 1, policy has frequently had to be instituted by legal regulation or by detailed description and prescription. Academic content of courses is an example. Policy initiated at ministerial level (State or Federal) sometimes requires legal force in order to be effective throughout such large systems. Similarly, directives from Departments of Education have to specify the required changes in detail in order to overcome the difficulties of communication within systems entailing large numbers of schools, teachers and students dispersed over a very large area. Finally, since financial support for education lies to a major extent with the public sphere, educational policy must be seen to be publicly accountable. That means that the goals and methods for change must be precisely defined so that some evaluation of their effectiveness can be made. This process means that policy changes are slow and cumbersome, requiring widespread debate and consensus throughout the education systems. An additional effect might be that they would impose a uniformity which is not responsive either to changing circumstances or to specific local needs.

3. The role of research as an aid to policy making has gradually begun to be recognized in Australia. For example, agencies such as the Federal Department of Education have sponsored research projects designed to assist the development of policies on particular matters. Special committees of inquiry have been set up to supply 'expert' advice on policy. One of the most recent (which we discussed previously) was the Williams Committee[17] which reported on education, training and employment.

Often, though, policy-making and the research that supports it are very slow processes. The result can be that the response to problem situations is not very efficient. Emergent crises (especially in the educational sphere) are often of such political moment that decisions to act may be made in an *ad hoc* and over-hasty manner with little consideration of their manifest consequences and even less consideration of their latent consequences. This has certainly been the case with child migrant education and refugee education which we shall discuss again later in this chapter. Long-term educational planning has not been a feature of Australian education. At the State level, the reason for this lies particularly with budgetary constraints, since State budgets are 'refurbished' only on an annual basis following the Premiers' Conference which allocates the income tax reimbursement. The university sector, which is funded Federally, has enjoyed triennial budgeting. This seems to indicate that governments assume that university education requires long-term planning while school education does not. Obviously there is a need for more consultation and better co-ordination at Federal and State levels of government on educational policy.

4. The story of educational control and change since 1945 in Australia is one of increasing Federal government involvement. The relationship between the States and the Commonwealth regarding education was defined in 1901, and it was not until the 1940s that any significant redefinition was necessary. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Federal government abolished the 'State aid' concept with its policies on funding for science laboratories and libraries and financial support for all schools (both State and non-State). It had been a long-standing controversy in Australian education. Since the government schools are 'free' and open to all, many people have argued that non-government schools should support themselves financially. However, the introduction of a Federal funding policy for schools has, to a degree, diverted this debate. A second important factor is that since the 1950s, the Federal government has played

a dominant role in the formulation and funding of policies for the post-secondary level of education, especially universities. There is no doubt that without Federal intervention many of the post-war educational changes could not have occurred or could only have taken place at a much slower rate.

The changing relation between the Commonwealth and the States is a central issue in educational policy. We have observed already that the policy for an entire State system is made at the political and administrative focus, the State capital. In addition the most significant administrative controls and decision making emanate from that focus. This generalization is not invalidated by the examples of decentralization of administration, such as regional offices, or by the devolution of administrative authority that is reflected, for example, in the 'new style' school councils which we have discussed in Chapter 8. However, there have been shifts, especially in the post-war years, in the 'Federal–State balance' which have had extensive implications for educational policy and planning. In fact, Federal involvement in educational matters has been an important cornerstone in the gradual domination of government in Australia by the Federal system since 1945. This is because education is a key area of governmental activity and public spending. One other reason for government interest in education is that it is an area that engenders considerable debate and conflict. Any government is wary of persistent instability in a society because it is likely to result in pressures which contribute to change, if not reform.

5. In some respects, the trends in Australian education have not followed the patterns of change in other similar Western countries. This is due to specific historical factors such as the absence of large homogeneous minority groups (for example, racially different groups) and the relative weakness of the protest movement concerned with education in Australia. One example of difference is the lack of nation-wide compensatory programmes similar to the Headstart programme of the United States. Another example is immigration. The influx of immigrants into Canada and Australia since World War 2 has been met with different policies in those countries in spite of basic similarities in the phenomenon itself. The fact that Canada has two clearly differentiated majority cultural groups (the Anglo- and Franco-Canadian) has facilitated (if not necessitated) the implementation of policies for a multicultural/multilingual Canada. The approach has been to adopt a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. The major educational policy of (English-French) bilingualism was established first, and subsequent policies have had to work in harmony with it. Australia has officially portrayed itself as a fundamentally monocultural/monolingual country. The Australian response to large scale immigration has been to resist as long as possible any recognition in policy terms of the presence of a large minority exhibiting a range of different cultural and linguistic patterns. As there is still no national language policy, the recent support for multiculturalism in education has no clearly defined meaning as yet.

6. Accelerated change has been the trend in Australian education as elsewhere in the society. However, we must note that as important as the rapidity of change has been, the piecemeal nature of change has been an even more significant trend. This arises from a host of factors, many of which have been examined in this book. One of the factors which has maintained the piecemeal approach to change has been the rigidity of Federal–State relations and State–State relations. These relations are generally oriented towards the maintenance of 'boundaries' between responsibilities,

and consequently, there is often resistance to any moves to shift boundaries. Such a stance inhibits the flow of information, personnel and other resources among States and between the State and Federal spheres. In turn, the continuation of this tendency over a period of time engenders a need for longer structural change to bring about changes in ideas (and ideologies). Structural change can be time-consuming, expensive, and difficult. For example, large-scale research and development in the area of curriculum has been needed for many years. It has been boosted only recently by the creation of the national Curriculum Development Centre which is based in Canberra. An example of how protectiveness over 'boundaries' has inhibited change has been the slow diffusion of innovations to other States from the new autonomous Australian Capital Territory Education Authority which was for years tied to the New South Wales education system. The ACT Authority has made innovations with respect to (1) assessment (for example, alternatives to the Higher School Certificate, the ACT Accrediting Agency); (2) curriculum (for example, the introduction of sociology to the secondary school curriculum); and (3) structures (for example, the establishment of senior colleges or the School Without Walls). There is some evidence that only limited exchange of views on these innovations has occurred between the States.

The Federal Government and Education

The Federal government has had some involvement in education as early as World War 1.[18] Examples include: (1) the launching of its repatriation education programme and the related Soldiers' Children Education Scheme (programmes that were substantially repeated following subsequent wars in which Australia took part), (2) its involvement in the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, (3) the support of particular activities in universities (such as aeronautics at Sydney University), and (4) sponsorship of pre-school education (the Lady Gowrie Centres in the 1930s). It was as a result of World War 2, however, that the Federal government became committed to large-scale and permanent participation in Australian education. The aims of its initiatives in the 1940s were firstly directed towards the war effort. It began the Technical Training Scheme for men and women needed in the defence industries and the armed services, the Financial Assistance Scheme to provide financial support for university students, and the Army Education Service which provided adult education courses and pre-vocational and vocational education for armed services personnel. Subsequently, programmes were directed towards post-war reconstruction; for example, the Post-War Reconstruction Training Scheme made provision for the formal education of ex-service men and women.

It has been important to mention these activities because many of the later Federal initiatives received their impetus or were facilitated because 'the ground' had been prepared already. Thus it was that, as early as 1951, the Federal government had secured a permanent role in Australian education, initially at the tertiary level. At that time, the Office of Education (later to become the Department of Education and Science, and then, the Commonwealth Department of Education) was expanding, and a Universities' Commission had been set up to provide a co-ordinating body that would supervise the expanding university sector and provide informed advice to the Federal government. Through the schemes for scholarships, grants, research funds, and funds for the recurrent costs of residential colleges associated with universities,

the Federal government had effectively assumed control of universities that had been previously considered State organizations. At this stage, it avoided involvement in other forms of post-secondary education (technical and teachers' colleges) and in the secondary and primary school systems. It did so because of the potentially enormous costs involved, the potential conflict over the respective responsibilities of State and Federal governments, and the potentially troublesome pressures which might be aroused for government aid to be given to the non-State educational systems. Since 1951, however, these decisions have been reversed, and the Federal government has become progressively more involved in educational policy making and planning at school level especially. This is a significant change. The Federal government actively entered upon a structured programme of intervention.[19] We shall briefly trace the main features of that intervention and some of the social factors influencing the various stages.

The Federal government entered the field of direct funding of school education in 1963. In that year, a £5 million grant was made available for science laboratories and equipment. The duplication of this precedent came in 1968 with the grants for school libraries. From this point on, Federal aid to schools both increased in financial terms and diversified in nature. The policy of funding specific programmes was continued with the introduction in 1970 of the Child Migrant Education Programme supported by an Act of Parliament. By 1972, a collection of programmes at the primary and secondary levels entailing both general recurrent and capital aid funds had been initiated by the Federal government. Together these programmes seemed to entrench Federal involvement in educational policy making as a new feature in Australian education.

The Federal government's involvement came in response to numerous pressures. One of these was the pressure for additional funds from State education systems. Many of the pressures were more general, however. The 1960s was a turbulent period in Australia, and education emerged as possibly the dominant social and political issue. A host of factors, such as population pressure, increased educational aspirations, greater affluence, and the particular difficulties being encountered by the religious schools led to a consciousness of crisis in education. Vociferous demands were made to governments for specific purpose grants, such as those listed above, and for recurrent grants, such as per capita grants to schools, scholarships, or student loan schemes.

In the electioneering prior to the 1972 poll, the Liberal Party disclosed a five-year capital assistance programme for State and non-State schools to cost $215 million. However, the programme consisted of a number of *ad hoc* initiatives. It drew criticism because it did not show that any serious thought had been given to ensuring rational long-term planning. In contrast, the Australian Labor Party's educational platform promised a massive increase in spending which would be planned and directed by a Schools Commission. This last proposal was, in effect, a structural change, intended to ensure that appropriate machinery was available to bring about rational, planned change.

The contrasts between these programmes highlight the different approaches taken by each party to achieve the same ostensible goal. The goal of equality of educational opportunity was openly endorsed by the Liberal Party, and its proposals included various types of compensatory programmes designed to reduce inequality. However, as its proposed allocation of financial resources favoured the non-State

sector, which included the affluent, élite independent schools as well as the struggling Catholic parish schools, the perpetuation of advantage was virtually ensured. The Labor Party's platform also supported the goal of equality of educational opportunity. However, it took *need* to be the main criterion for the allocation of resources. In doing so, it emphasized the equalization of educational outcomes by discriminating positively in favour of those groups disadvantaged from the start of their schooling by factors such as unfavourable social circumstances.

The Labor victory in the election resulted in the setting up of the Schools Commission in 1973. We shall discuss detailed aspects of the Schools Commission in the following section. The advent of the Schools Commission signalled the initiation of a range of programmes and brought a rate of spending not seen before at the Federal level. By 1975, however, economic difficulties, principally caused by inflation, had put a rein on spending. Since the return to power of a Liberal-National Country Party government at the end of that year, the fortunes of the Schools Commission have steadily declined. Funding is sufficient only to maintain a 'steady state' condition, and there is some uncertainty about the continuing existence of the Commission. The new government marked a return to the theme of widening educational opportunity and maintaining educational quality and excellence. This would suggest that its policy orientation is a meritocratic one. The increased transfer of funds to the non-State sector of education seems to support this view. The full effects of the introduction of the 'New Federalism' policy, which shifts funding and administrative obligations back to the States, have yet to be felt.

The growth of Federal involvement in education has reflected a number of the themes concerning policy and change outlined at the beginning of the chapter. Tannock[20] has suggested the following summary of the general consequences of the Federal government's initiative in the schools sector:

1. There has been an increase in State dependence on Federal direction and support for educational programmes.
2. Federal scholarship programmes and subsequent benefit schemes have made the Federal authorities the guarantor of the formal education of a large proportion of students.
3. The previously-accepted policy of *no* State aid has been abolished.
4. Australian education has been further standardized.

Specific Federal Policies

The Schools Commission

The phrase 'the renewal of Australian schools' has often been used in relation to the establishment and functioning of the Schools Commission.[21] This organization has been seen in many ways as a symbol for change in schooling in Australia. For this reason we will examine it in more detail. A second purpose for this examination is that the consequences of the activities of the Schools Commission are to be seen not only at the system level, but also at the level of the classroom. This, as we noted at the beginning of this chapter, is a concern of sociologists who use the framework of the politics of school knowledge.

The Schools Commission was established with two major responsibilities. It was to act as an advisory body to the government on financial allocations for schools and school systems, and it was to be a research body inquiring into and reporting on any facet of primary or secondary schooling. On the basis of these terms of reference, the Commission initiated a number of programmes.[22] These included:

1. The Innovation Programme: to stimulate innovation by teachers in order to achieve diversity in educational provision, a strengthening of community involvement in schools, and other goals.
2. The Disadvantaged Schools Programme: to facilitate positive discrimination on the basis of need.
3. The Teacher Development Programme: to provide funds for in-service teacher education courses and for Education Centres.
4. Various programmes for libraries, special education, and general recurrent and general buildings ventures (that is, for additional staff, both professional and non-professional, and for extra classrooms or new schools).

The range of these programmes indicates the depth of penetration into the school sector that was proposed by the Federal authorities. The Schools Commission disbursed funds totalling $700 million in 1979. This contrasts dramatically with the $99 million made available for school funding in 1971-72 by the Federal government, and demonstrates the degree of commitment on the part of the Federal government to change (and, necessarily, control) in schooling in Australia.

D'Cruz and Sheehan[23] have summed up the major thrusts in the Commission's renewal strategy as (1) an emphasis on improving the resource standards of schools, (2) a concern for broadening the decision-making base in schools and their communities, and (3) a focus on developing curricula which gives serious attention to the purpose and content of schooling and to the quality of educational processes. They suggest that these thrusts represent successive phases in the growth of the Commission's activity. The more concrete emphasis on resource allocation was the initial phase, while curriculum development came at a later time when serious unease about education brought a need to reconsider, in fundamental ways, what was the legitimate knowledge to be transmitted by schools.

These successive phases reflect the shifting emphasis in educational policy that has also been identified in other Western industrialized countries from a goal of equality of opportunity, to a goal of equality of outcomes and finally to a fundamental questioning of the bases of education and society. We must note, however, that in practice these phases overlap. Successive concerns do not destroy previous ones but continue to be reflected in the policies of particular political parties or other sections of society.

The Schools Commission might be seen as a barometer of changing social values and ideologies not only in education, but also, more generally, in society. In Bernstein's words:

> How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.[24]

However, it is too soon for a comprehensive evaluation of the role of the Schools Commission to have been undertaken. We can only speculate that if the fortunes of the Schools Commission decline because of the meritocratic educational policies of conservative governments, the process of devolution of power and control to individual schools will be halted. As a corollary, dominant power and control will revert back to centralized authorities such as departments of education. With policy once more under centralized control, conditions will be less favourable for change.

The Galbally Report

Our second example of Federal involvement in education has been chosen to illustrate the potential of policy development to influence educational change and not just change in 'schooling'. We are referring to the Federal government's endorsement of the Galbally Report and its goal of a *multicultural Australia*. One of the Report's central recommendations for achieving that goal is a policy of multicultural education.[25]

The Galbally Committee was established in September 1977, and it reported in May 1978. Its terms of reference[26] specified the examination of the welfare, health, education, and employment services and programmes provided by both government and non-government agencies to migrants. The review was conducted 'with regard to the Fraser Government's Federalism policy and its objectives of encouraging self-help'.[27] The Committee concluded that it was necessary at that time for the Federal government to change direction in its provisions for migrants, that it should take further steps to encourage multiculturalism and involve both ethnic communities and government in these activities. The principles which guided the Committee in its formulation of its recommendations were expressed as follows:

> (1) All members of our society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services.
> (2) Every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures.
> (3) Needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community, but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equality of access and provision.
> (4) Services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly.[28]

These recommendations advocate policies which would create 'equal access for all' to community programmes and services. It is implied that the provision of such special services and programmes for a limited period ('at present') will result in equality of outcomes ('maintenance of culture without prejudice or disadvantage'). However, it does not examine the possibility that the maintenance of culture may be less important than access to status and power for social groups that suffer structural disadvantage. Previous discussions in this book have indicated that many immigrants occupy the lowest positions in Australia's stratified society. To talk of equal access and opportunity, on the one hand and to encourage self-help and self-reliance on the other, seems to echo the meritocratic goal which appears when efficiency and equality are closely linked. In a meritocratic system, those already advantaged by their

position in society have a 'headstart' and are likely to retain their advantage over others.

Some specific recommendations were made in the Report concerning education at the school level.[29] The Committee suggested: (1) that extra funding of $15 million over the following three years should be made available for (a) the teaching of English as a second language, (b) multicultural education, and (c) the setting up of a Commonwealth-State working party to collect and analyze financial and educational information for planning and evaluation purposes; (2) that $1.8 million over the following three years be provided to establish an Institute of Multicultural Affairs (one of its suggested tasks was to supply information on migrant issues to schools). Within this definition of multicultural education, the Committee included: (1) the learning of languages other than English by *all* Australians, (2) the teaching of histories and cultures of other ethnic groups, (3) the development of bilingual teaching, (4) the expansion of teacher education into the field of multicultural education, (5) the development of relevant curricula and teaching resources, and (6) the greater involvement of parents and community in the schools.

Other recommendations[30] were concerned with broader aspects of education. They covered: (1) the teaching of English to adult migrants, (2) the provision of a new initial-settlement programme, (3) the provision of multicultural resource centres in areas of need, (4) the addition of multicultural components to professional courses in tertiary organizations, and (5) the inception of ethnic radio and television. Not all of these recommendations were given a specific funding allocation.

The three year period specified for the implementation of the recommendations of the Galbally Report has not been completed at the time of writing this book. It is not possible therefore to indicate whether these educational goals were achieved. However, some of the general trends in society and education which may affect implementation are already known. For example, it was announced in early 1980 that the Institute of Multicultural Affairs was to be established in Melbourne, although as yet little information on how the Institute is to function has been made public. However, indications in 1979 were that Federal funds for teacher education would be reduced over the foreseeable future, because of an oversupply of teachers and population projections which suggested a continued downturn in the numbers of school students. There have been general cutbacks in education budgets since the return to power in 1975 of conservative government. These factors have limited the ability of the post-secondary and school sectors to respond to new concerns such as those suggested in the Galbally Report. There has also been considerable criticism directed at the ethnic media services which underwent pilot trials in 1979 and 1980. Finally, the special English programmes made available under the 1970 Child Migrant Education Programme have not yet been evaluated, even though a new impetus in this field has been recommended in the Galbally Report.

We do not have a body of evidence concerning the implementation of the Galbally Report. Therefore we are limited to raising some critical questions from a perspective of the politics of educational knowledge.

In the words of the Galbally Committee itself, its recommendations were to be seen as an 'integrated package of measures for introduction over a period of three years, to enable the Commonwealth government to take further steps to encourage multiculturalism and were made with regard to the limits of acceptable resources [and

to the] Government's commitment to some new programs'.[31] Soon after the presentation of the Report to Parliament, the government accepted the recommendations completely. The Committee's conclusions and the government's rapid acceptance of them seem to suggest that the Report's recommendations coincided very closely with the interests of the government. The commitment to the very broad goal of encouragement of multiculturalism through a policy with such precise funding and time limits raises questions about the government's definition of a multicultural Australia.

Liffman[32] has suggested that the Report is either naive or cynical if viewed from the standpoint of migrants' interests. If the 'integrated package' concept is naive, perhaps this is because the recommendations rest on bureaucratic assumptions which do not match the reality of the situation. For example, there seems to be an assumption that social attitudes such as prejudice will change because of the provision of special ethnic radio or television. If ethnic radio or television do not make any difference to real or perceived disadvantage in society, then it is difficult to see how attitudes will change. On the other hand, if the concept of the integrated package is a cynical exercise, a pretence of action, then we would need to ask whether those who devised or recommended it had a 'hidden agenda'. Such an agenda would profess an acceptable ideology of equality but not provide the resources to implement it. It would change the rhetoric of the situation but not the reality. In seeking to block social change, it would hide the reality under a myth. It would allow additive change but not reformative change.

Such criticism of the Report notwithstanding, the *fact* of the Federal government's acceptance of a *multi-faceted* policy to deal more effectively with the consequences of large-scale immigration and the *fact* that this was the first time that such an all-embracing policy had been developed are both interesting indications of our society's development. Why should these events have occurred when they did? One line of explanation might be developed in terms of changing ideologies which have a strong controlling influence on how social problems are defined and on which solutions to these problems are seen as legitimate. For example, sociologists such as Martin[33] have argued that the official response to the migrant presence had become, by the late 1970s, an ideology of pluralism. However, the former 'official' ideologies of assimilation or of integration have not completely disappeared. The apparent limitations of the Galbally Report could be interpreted as the result of tensions between these conflicting ideologies.

Another legitimate question to ask about this policy is, simply, what is implied by the Report's definition of a *multicultural* Australia? The guiding principles expressed in the Report and reiterated by the Prime Minister when he tabled the Report gave a generalized picture. But given the specificity of the resource allocations and the time allowed to encourage a multicultural attitude, it is hard to see how the vague goals of 'retention of culture without disadvantage' or 'full consultation with clients' could be fulfilled. Is multiculturalism merely an attitude to be cultivated or is it a reflection of social structure and social organization? The greatest emphasis in the Report is given to the learning of English, yet the funds allocated are very small given the great number of adults and children of non-English-speaking background in the Australian population. The Report gave no consideration to the difficulties involved in language instruction, nor did it weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of bilingual education as opposed to teaching English as a second language. It did not suggest how to provide appropriate training for those teaching English in a time of

reduced education spending. Apart from these pragmatic issues, there is no discussion of the implicit assumption that learning English will necessarily help migrants gain access to the status and power held by English-speakers.

The Galbally Report seems to imply that multiculturalism is not a fact with social consequences, but simply an attitude to be encouraged. Education is singled out in the Report as the institution which can bring about such a change in attitude and counteract the established elements of *monocultural* Australian society. Questions that arise from this stance concerning education and social change are not confronted in the Report. There is no discussion of structural changes in society which must accompany an educational policy designed to influence attitudes.

Summary

Policies may contain visions of alternative futures and are thus highly useful for indicating the ideological and political contexts of present-day issues. They are also significant initiators of change and mechanisms for control because they translate ideas and ideologies into social action. For these reasons, this chapter has examined policy as a means of bringing into sharper focus the forces of control and change which have been persistent themes of the entire book.

We have explored the themes of control and change by returning in several places to certain basic issues (such as the place of women in Australian society, ethnic and race relations, etc.) and examining different aspects of these issues by means of different sociological frameworks. In doing so, we have been unable to avoid the conclusion that Australia's dual system of schooling serves to reinforce the divisions in Australan society between the affluent and the less affluent, amongst different ethnic groups, between the sexes and between different races.

The current educational system is a product of our social and cultural history. Its continuation, however, reflects the power behind the ideologies that legitimize, both openly and implicitly, the *status quo*. Thus, the institution of education is enabled 'to transmit, reinforce, and reproduce the structure of dominance relations in Australian society'.[34] Social inequality is transformed into educational inequality, which clearly must ensure the continuation of social inequality.

We have in this book explored both familiar and unfamiliar aspects of social reality in Australia. We have employed a range of sociological theories to get a sense of the diversity of possible explanations of social phenomena. These explorations should have helped us to realize that both public issues and private concerns must be considered in any study of Australian education and that the sociological perspective, by making us more critically aware, more imaginative, and less bound by our individual and national limitations, can help us to understand them both.

Endnotes

[1]For a general discussion of policy and planning in Australian education along these lines, see, R. Fitzgerald, 'Planning for Effective Education: A matter of Faith or Despair?', in The Australian College of Education, *Planning for Effective Education*, 1971, pp.17-26.
[2]Commentaries on educational reform in those countries include M. Whyte, 'Educational

Reform: China in the 1970s and Russia in the 1920s', *Comparative Education Review* 18, 1974, pp.112-28; S. Bowles, 'Cuban Education and the Revolutionary Ideology', *Harvard Educational Review* 41, 1971, pp.472-500; N. Selden, *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1971.

[3]R. Carlton, L. Colley and N. MacKinnon, *Education, Change and Society*, Toronto; Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1977, p.459.

[4]This point is argued in detail by A. H. Halsey in connection with the problems and policies of Educational Priority Areas in Britain; see A. Halsey (ed.), *Educational Priority*, Vol. I. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972, especially Part One, 'The E.P.A. Problem'.

[5]You will recall that sociology as a form of consciousness and the concept of cosmopolitanism was discussed in P. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin, 1966, pp.37-67.

[6]Ibid., pp.51-3.

[7]To gain an overview of some of the concerns of a 'politics of school knowledge', see, G. Whitty and M. Young (eds), *Explorations in the Politics of School Knowledge*, Driffield, Nafferton, 1976.

[8]See, for example, M. F. D. Young, 'On the Politics of Educational Knowledge', *Economy and Society* 1, 1970, pp.194-215.

[9]Halsey, op. cit., pp.6-11. Other sources on educational policy in these countries include, D. Rubinstein and C. Stoneman (eds), *Education for Democracy*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Education, 1970; J. S. Coleman et. al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966; Carlton, Colley and MacKinnon, op. cit.; P. Partridge, *Society, Schools and Progress in Australia*, Australia, Pergamon Press, 1973, rev. edn.

[10]Halsey, op. cit., p.8.

[11]Further information on these measures can be found in A. and R. Parelius, *The Sociology of Education*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1978, especially pp.361-92; G. La Noue, *Educational Vouchers: Concepts and Controversies*, New York, Teachers College Press, 1972; T. Hesburgh, P. Miller and C. Wharton, *Patterns of Lifelong Learning*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1973; R. Rist, 'Why Public Schools Don't Change: An Assessment of Current Attempts At Educational Reform in the United States', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal Of Sociology* 10, (1), 1974, pp.26-30.

[12]See Halsey, op. cit., Chapter 4, 'Definition of E.P.A.' and Chapter 14, 'E.P.A. Policy'.

[13]Carlton, et. al., op. cit., contains a number of chapters especially in Part 2, 'Cultural Pluralism and Educational Mosaic', which present more detail of these types of initiatives. Their book is also a rich source of further reading on the Canadian context.

[14]M. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, London, Henley and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, pp.160-6.

[15]See, the Introduction to Whitty and Young, op. cit., pp.1-6.

[16]The following discussion draws on G. Harman, 'The Government of Australian Education', in G. Harman and C. Selby-Smith (eds), *Readings in the Economics and Politics of Australian Education*, Rushcutters Bay, Pergamon, 1976, pp.12-27.

[17]This Committee of Inquiry was established by the Federal government in October 1976 and reported in February 1979.

[18]An article by P. Tannock entitled, 'The Development of the Federal Government's Role in Australian Education', in Harman and Selby-Smith, op. cit., pp.28-31 provides a summary covering the pre- and post-war periods.

[19]D. Smart, *Federal Aid to Australian Schools*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1978, is recognized as the definitive source on the Federal government's move into the school level of education. This book contains many useful references to follow-up on this issue. The following discussion accords largely with Smart's interpretation.

[20]Tannock, op. cit., p.30.

[21]See V. D'Cruz and P. Sheehan (eds), *The Renewal of Australian Schools: A Changing Perspective in Educational Planning*, Hawthorn, Australian Council of Educational Research, 1978.

[22]For some discussion of each of these, see Smart, op. cit., pp.114-20.

[23]D'Cruz and Sheehan, op. cit., pp.5-7.

[24]B. Bernstein, 'On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge', in M. F. D. Young (ed.), *Knowledge and Control*, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1971, p.47.

[25]The Report, known commonly as the Galbally Report, is entitled *Migrant Services and Programs Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1978. The Prime Minister's statement on the tabling of the Report in Parliament can be found in Weekly Hansard, House of Representatives, 30 May 1978, pp.2727-32.

[26]The Galbally Report, op. cit., pp.1-2.

[27]Ibid., p.1.

[28]Ibid., p.4.

[29]Ibid., Recommendation (1): Chapters 3 and 9; and (2): p.109.

[30]Ibid., in order, pp.16 and 18, 15, 21, 26, 27.

[31]Ibid., pp.3 and 6.

[32]M. Liffman, 'The Galbally Report: An Overview', *Migration Action* IV, (1), 1979, p.14.

[33]Institutionalized response to immigration in Australia and the role played by ideologies was the theme of the study by Martin. See J. Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, Sydney, Geo. Allen and Unwin, 1978.

[34]D. Edgar, *Introduction to Australian Society*, Sydney, Prentice-Hall of Australia, 1980, p.131.

5

The control and rationalisation of schooling

M. Pusey

Source: M. Pusey, 'The control and rationalisation of schooling' in R.K. Browne & L.E. Foster (eds), *Sociology of Education* (Australian and New Zealand Studies), 3rd edn, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 401-9.

This paper argues that education in the 1980s will be dominated by conflict over its governance and control.

Why should control be the central issue which best explains the agenda for the 1980s? Because, as the first half of this paper will argue: (a) education is so *central* to the social, political and economic life of the society; because (b), even under 'normal' conditions education systems in 'developed' western societies are, by their very nature, resistant to *control*, and (c) because accelerating social change generates *new demands* on education systems. There is need to look at each of these factors before attempting a more specific explanation of how conflicts over control will manifest themselves in the years ahead.

The Centrality of Educational Functions

Education is central to the society in fairly obvious ways. In these times we are constantly reminded that the schools do, or should, provide a whole population with 'basic skills' and we are reminded too that all of this is central and important, inasmuch as it costs more money than any other single government service. However, this overt *training function* is just the beginning of a proper reckoning of the importance of schooling. There is a broad consensus between Marxists and other critics on the 'left', and the élite defenders of the high culture on the 'right', inasmuch as both agree with just about everybody else, firstly, that we all live in a society which is divided into different social classes, and secondly, that education maintains and supports those class divisions.

This points to what is, in our society, the *allocation function* of schooling. Whereas we were once allocated to social classes by birthright this now occurs principally as a consequence of schooling.

This more or less clearly perceived understanding of the allocation function of schooling finds its reflections in the ambitions — and the disappointments — of individual parents and children. It also helps explain the latent but enormous political significance of education: since the education system allocates class position, it follows that any instability or redistribution of wealth, power and status must impinge on the education system, and either overtly or covertly, put pressure on the structure and management of education.

We see this centrality of education, and again its latent social and political significance, when we grasp the scope of its *legitimation function*:

> Mass education creates a whole series of social assumptions about the common culture of society and expands the social meaning of citizenship, personhood, and individuality (modern ideas all). It establishes a whole series of common elements for everyone: (a) it creates the assumption of a national language or languages and defines universal literacy, (b) it reifies a given national history (c) it constructs a common civic order — common heroes and villains, a common constitutional and political order with some shared cultural symbols and with legitimate national participation; (d) it validates the existence of a common natural reality through science and a common logical structure through mathematics and in this way constructs a myth of a common culture intimately linked to world society. (e) It constructs broad definitions of citizenship and human rights as part of the modern world view. (Meyer, 1977).

The Difficulties of Controlling Education Systems

The control of education is highly problematic because teaching is particularly resistant to the usual methods and processes of organisational control. There is, in other words, a permanent tension between teaching and administration (Pusey; 1976a). At the root of this problem is the multiplicity of educational goals. Schools are expected to impart a body of knowledge, to develop intellectual and manipulative skills; to educate aesthetic and moral sensibilities; and to teach children to care for the environment and to cope with leisure, with motor cars, with the media, with sexuality, and so on *ad infinitum*. The formal goals of education, the typical laundry lists of educational 'aims and objectives' are now so diverse and so diffuse that they amount to nothing less than *total personality development*.

The important organisational consequence is that the objectives have become almost completely indeterminate and, for this very reason, incommensurate with bureaucratic structures and processes and with the typical forms of organisational control. Poorly defined and diffuse goals are the enemy of bureaucratic administration because they cannot be readily 'operationalised' and so they militate against the stable division and standardisation of tasks and hence, against effectively supervised direction and control.

Education in this way continues to resist administrative control (Pusey, 1980). We can expect this 'problem' to continue because although governments would like very much to specify and to tighten up what Philip Coombs (1968) called 'the functional specifications' of the education system, they nevertheless continue, on the contrary, to dump every new social problem at the door of the education system and in this way to charge it with the constantly widening demand that it should teach this and that and everything else. And of course this widening of the teacher's responsibilities makes control still more difficult to achieve because it unwittingly serves also to justify claims for a correspondingly expanded area of discretionary judgement over curriculum and classroom practice.

Moreover, the structure, especially of the primary school, gives the teacher some strong defences which are unavailable to many other salaried professionals. The primary school teacher, more so even than the secondary teacher, can maintain a measure of autonomy within the isolation and sanctuary of the classroom inasmuch as 'the classroom provides teachers [with] a sanctuary from effective social control by the broader culture' (Warren 1973).

Social Pressures for more Control and New Demands

My third argument is that the *cumulative effects of social change* are creating new pressures which will be felt in the years ahead as new bids for increased control: and, since it is clearly inappropriate to attempt a review of such an extensive literature here, I make four general observations:

The massive cumulative effects of urbanisation and industrialisation have virtually destroyed three 'institutions' which were once central to the process of socialisation: the local community neighbourhood, the extended family and the church. The educational functions of these key 'institutions' have, in the absence of all adequate alternatives, been loaded on to the schools.

Moreover, second, traditionally accepted attitudes, values, and outlooks used to give firm shape, content, and direction to the curriculum and to educational policy and management. They conferred a commanding authority upon the school and gave it a prominent place among what were formerly 'creedally authoritative institutions' (Rieff 1973:21). As Crozier says (Crozier 1975:27) in his report to the Trilateral Commission:

> Education as a moral establishment....is in trouble all over Western Europe. It has lost its former authority. Teachers cannot believe any more in their sacred mission as their students do not accept their authority as easily as they did before. Along with the religious rationale for the social order educational authority does not hold firm anymore...Routine makes it possible for the system to work and the sheer necessity and weight of its functions will maintain it in operation. But the malaise is deep. The dogmatic structure disintegrates; no one knows how to operate without a structure.

The situation is the same here in Australia. The obvious consequence is that this 'dogmatic structure' has no functionally adequate substitute and that there is now no readily available way of compensating for the resulting disintegration and incoherence of educational policy and for the correspondingly weakened capacity to control and steer the system.

Third, these same currents of change have also given rise to what is aptly labelled as the 'privatisation' of life in 'advanced' capitalist societies. Privatisation produces important changes in the definition of psychological identity.

The consequences of this are echoed in our typical observations of the so-called youth culture: since there are too many contending choices they learn to avoid choosing. Psychological and quasi-psychological interpretations of internal processes have produced 'an interim ethic of release from inherited controls' (Rieff 1973:20–21). Institutions can no longer so easily use unconscious fears and guilt feelings as a way of maintaining loyalty and commitment. Introspection then tends to weaken institutional commitments and to generate a free-floating subjectivity which *resists external direction*. Most of these changes work *against* social conformity and, more significantly in the context of this discussion, *against established modes of organisational membership and participation*.

In this second half of the discussion, I intend (a) to look at new and emerging forms of control, (b) to consider the normative basis of this control and to raise some basic objections against its assumptions, and then (c) to give a concrete example of how these new controls operate in relation to the state education systems.

(a) *Contemporary Forms of Control*

In the 1980s governments will push for stronger and changed forms of control over education. Most teachers, lay people, and many systems

administrators are likely to respond nervously and defensively to such an assertion with hurried answers to their own question: 'control over what?' Over this, or that element of the budget? Over which aspects of the curriculum? Over what committees? Over which sectors of the system? Formulations of this kind show that we are used to thinking about control in a *concrete* and *specific* way as control over this or that particular aspect of the education system or even as control in the service of particular 'conservative' or 'progressive' policies. They also show that we have missed the point.

Basically, governments do *not* want concrete and specific controls because the proliferation of specific controls creates unmanageably complex coordination problems (Crozier: 1973). What they want, in the first instance, is something very much more abstract and general. The very best sociological analyses on both the so-called 'left' (Habermas 1976) and 'right' (Crozier *et. al.*, 1978) both agree that what governments want is more *governability*, i.e. control of a more generalised sort or, in other words, a kind of guaranteed obedience in advance of particular commands. Habermas's way of putting it is to say that governments seek more 'steering capacity' in a sense, more power.

In order to increase steering capacity in democratic countries, governments, i.e., the state, needs to produce voluntary compliance and involvement. Under favourable economic conditions, the state tries to buy compliance with money handouts: a good example is the Schools Commission's massive Recurrent Expenses handouts to the state systems in the early 1970s. However, this is insufficient and often unreliable and it is in any case unworkable in unfavourable economic conditions, and during low points in the business cycle when there is simultaneously a call for *more* control and *less* government expenditure.

How then is steering capacity increased? Bates suggests a first approximate answer as follows: 'Scientific problem-solving for society and societal management are but two sides of a single ideological coin' (Bates, 1974).

Scientific problem-solving creates steering capacity. It may or may not solve the explicit problems to which it is overtly addressed but it will, other things remaining equal, *make way for administrative control over hitherto unrationalised practice.*

Yet parents, teachers, and the local school communities have so far not seen that the method of controlling education has, since the 1960s changed quite markedly to the point now where governmental and *higher administrative control is more ideological than hierarchial in the old fashioned bureaucratic sense*. Control is now reaffirmed indirectly through outside agencies, i.e. Control is now reaffirmed indirectly through outside agencies, i.e. the teacher-training institutions, research organisation, and, specialists in the fields of curriculum development, educational administration and educational evaluation. It is the task of those specialists and agencies to apply social scientific research knowledge and methods to the 'rationalisation' and hence to the *control* of educational practice. In the chilling language of cybernetic systems analysis one refers to these bodies and to their technologies as 'auxilliary steering systems'.

Objections to 'Scientism': In Defence of Educational Practice

We may now usefully consider some objections which need to be raised in defence of educational practice. The purpose here is not to vindicate everything which teachers actually do in their classrooms but rather to outline some of the grounds for the defence of practice *per se* against its scientistic rationalisation. These objections may be outlined as follows:

1 Contemporary criticisms of positivist science and current developments in the philosophy of the social sciences strongly imply, or, at the least, certainly allow, the view that the *logical status of social scientific research depends* on *its relation to practice*. In other words the practical activity itself and, in Habermas's language, the 'cognitive interests' which guide it are crucial to any reckoning of the validity claims of the ensuing research findings. Insofar as these validity claims are shown to be void then applied social science can no longer claim that it controls areas of social life for the sake of and in the interest of truth, justice, reason, etc.: it then loses its legitimating force and stands plausibly accused as an instrument of control for the sake of, and in the interest of, control alone.

2 Most people are now generally aware of the ecological and other literature on environmental destruction, the depletion of resources, and the physical limits of industrialisation, There is, however, less awareness of the evidence and arguments which support the view that *culture* (and 'culturally mediated' meanings, understanding, and communication) is both an exhaustible resource and the necessary foundation for a form of reason — which is, in many essential respects more rational than the rationalisations which consume it. These views gain added weight from the fact that they are surprisingly and, in some large measure, common to basic intellectual positions on both the so-called 'right' and 'left' (Crozier, 1975: Rieff, 1973).

3 Scientistic research creates the unwarranted expectation that even the fine grain of educational practice can and should be more closely structured, and in principle, made more programmable. This suppresses the all-important question as to what are, or should be, the ethical, political, and organisational limits of rationalisation.

4 Scientism debases practice by inculcating the belief and the expectation that technical formulations of issues, and facts, are *ipso facto*, more authoritative than ordinary non-professional understandings of whatever is under scrutiny.

5 Scientism 'demoralises' educational practice by fostering what Berger (1974:34) calls a style of 'problem-solving inventiveness. . . that may be called a 'general tinkering attitude' 'which is based on the assumption that human values are irrelevant to the determination of the task'. The basic objection to this technological-experimental attitude is that it is dogmatically amoral inasmuch as it forces people to treat all ethical and moral claims in the same way as all other aspects of their work, i.e., as *manipulable variables*. This destroys one of the basis characteristics of practice, namely that it is structured in part by values and norms which have real constraining and imperative force and which are, or were, integral to practical activity.

6 Rationalising science destroys practice by *attacking its two essential constituents: common speech and experience*. Practice marshalls the facts, meanings, understandings, intuitions, ideas, procedures, and rules etc., which are available from the common culture(s). Basically these 'cultural contents' are realised and made effective in ordinary, unconstrained, everyday speech — in what philosophers and sociologists of language call 'natural language'. What science and false science do is to impose instead a 'constructed' or artificial language which restricts reference only to those elements which the 'model' is designed to control. Ordinary speech is the medium through which our total lived experience is used to comprehend shape, define, and unravel everything that faces us in every next minute of our waking

lives. The formal languages of science have the converse effect of blocking off reference to lived experience. Experience is only admissable insofar as it is 'objectified', depersonalised and expressed in terms which facilitate its one-sided assimilation into that part of the situation which is truly amenable to scientific management. The unwitting consequence (and often the complicitly acknowledged aim) of much educational research is to make educational issues unintelligible to the parents, citizens, pupils, and teachers who have the greatest stake in what is actually done in the classroom.

Externally Mediated Control and Rationalisation: an Example

But how and by what processes are applied social science research and its rationalisations brought to bear on educational practice? Curriculum development provides a useful local example of how this occurs.

In the case of the Australian Federal Government's Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) the methods of intervention vary between two modal strategies. The first is the standard Research and Development model of curriculum development and educational innovation. The developers begin by eliciting descriptions, demonstrations and explanations of the teaching practices of one or several teachers working in a particular situation. Then these practices are abstracted from the particular people and the particular contexts in which they were originally situate or first observed: translated into 'materials' and 'methods' and then transformed into packages or routines which are 'trialled', 'evaluated', and then 'adopted'. The usually hidden priority, and the implicit criterion of selection which guides every step of the process is the replicability of the practice in different situations, i.e. its potential usefulness and portability as an *administrative* resource. And so, 'development' is really a process of formalisation, which converts educational practice into administrative structure.

The second method of intervention which goes under the name of 'school-based curriculum development' serves the same function but the process is more discernibly political. The senior administrators in the 'client' state education system negotiate the place and style of the intervention (usually a workshop, seminar or conference) with the outside agency — here the CDC: this is usually done covertly since the perceived independence of the outside agency's field workers is an important resource for the production of control. In order both to leave field workers uncompromised and to draw the maximum benefit from their goodwill and commitment the initial negotiations with the system authorities are usually carried on over their heads. The purpose is to set up the intervention (conference, seminar, etc.) in a way which gives the administrators in the client system full participation in the 'problem-solving' discussions of the chosen target group of practising teachers and/or community and parent representatives, etc. The field workers then initiate and steer discussions in such a way as to 'problematise' existing practices (together with their cultural and communicative contexts), and to re-situate the discussions, questions and problems in a changed — and *rationalised* — frame of reference which reduces the experiential knowledge of educational practice to administratively manipulable formula. The language of educational evaluation provides added semantic resources for this purpose.

These two methods of intervention illustrate how CDC, a Federal research and development instrumentality, produces steering capacity for its client systems, the state education departments. In both cases the essentials of the process are the same. The intervention is only indirectly aimed at changes in the particulars of curriculum contents and practices:

the *direct* effect is to rationalise the general criteria of validation for the curriculum as a whole. And so the process of validation itself is the real target for the intervention and the basic purpose is to invalidate, undercut, or capture uncontrolled recourse to common cultural norms of truth, right, and commonsense. Discussions may seem thereafter to go on very much as before and people may tender their own beliefs, reflections, and understandings but insofar as the interventions are successful, the residual legitimacy and authority of culturally referenced validity claims is subordinated to the rationality of administrative control.

I have sought to argue that: the 1980s will be dominated by new bids for tighter control...that new and predominantly ideological controls would typically take the form of 'rationalisations' which governments will seek to design, impose, and legitimise by reference to *both* 'true *and* 'false' sciences ... that accordingly, key policy issues will depend on a proper reckoning of the *limits* or useful rationalisation....that these questions arise from an opposition between educational practice and rationalisation misconceived as the pseudo-scientific management of education and.... that for social and educational reasons, there is need to protect and to enrich educational practice.

In sum we may expect that governments will, in this decade, favour ideological means of creating more steering capacity in so far as there is a continuing call for *more* control and *less* government spending. Ideological controls are both potent and relatively inexpensive — educational research organisations and expert committees cost very little by comparison with expensive and uncertain attempts to buy improved education with tied grants to government schools. Controls of this kind are well suited to an activity like public schooling which is readily amenable to only a low level of honest rationalisation, and which is heavily charged with ideologically manipulable hopes, fears and doubts. The most basic practical implication is that educationists, teachers, and parents should prepare themselves to defend practice in the same medium in which it is subverted, i.e. with ideas. Groups and individuals succumb to ideological control when they are manoeuvred into a forced justification of their practice on criteria which are loaded against them; there is every chance that the demand for 'proper rationalisation' will be made and won in precisely this way while teachers and schools are busily fighting the Treasury for a 10 per cent increase in the allocation for disposable software or for the additional provision of half a remedial reading teacher for every 100 pupils.

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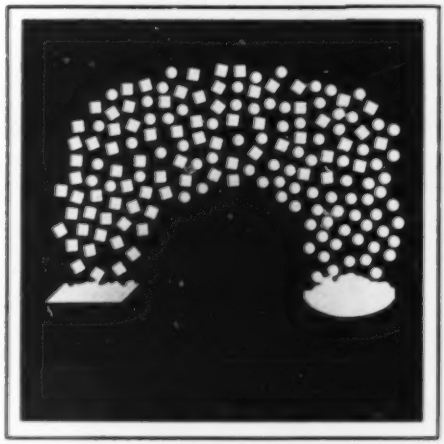

Apple, M. W. *Education and Power.* Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1982.
In this book Apple argues that it is incorrect to reduce all aspects of the form and content of the curricula and social relations of schools to the direct expressions of economic needs or of dominant class interests. In addition to an examination of the relationship between education and the economy it also looks at it in terms of political and cultural power. It integrates literature on class and gender values, the labour process and the state, into our analysis of teaching and the curriculum

Bessant, B., & Spaull, A. D. *Politics of Schooling.* Pitman, Carlton, Vic., 1976.
Although ten years old, this is still an interesting and useful text that examines how political processes and decisions have affected education in Australia over the previous fifty years. It studies a variety of aspects of schooling and politics, including the political role of the state in schooling during the world wars and the 'cold' war, the role of pressure groups in educational innovations and school financing.

Dale, R., Esland, G., Ferguson, R., & MacDonald, M. (eds). *Education and the State,* Vol. I *Schooling and the National Interest* (Politics and Education). Falmer in association with The Open University Press, Lewes, 1981.
This is the first of two volumes of readings compiled as part of the British Open University course, 'Education and the State'. The first volume contains some excellent contributions that examine elements of the large-scale political and economic structures affecting the provision of education.

Dwyer, P., Wilson, B., & Woods, R. *Confronting School and Work.* George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984.
This book looks specifically at the relationship between education and the job market, but combines detailed analysis of changes in economic policy with accounts of youth perspectives on school and work in Australia. It examines the effects of social forces and economic policy on the present generation of young adults and the ways they respond to the changes that put them at risk in a supposedly just and affluent society.

Sharp, R. *Knowledge, Ideology and the Politics of Schooling.* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980.
Rachel Sharp argues that a theory of ideology is essential to a theory of education, and suggests that sociologists of education have retreated into specialisation, thereby abandoning the holistic world view of the earlier theorists. She outlines the current state of the theory of ideology, and applies this concept in an analysis of contemporary schooling, concluding with a discussion of its political implications.

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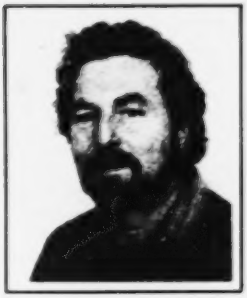
Written before the full impact of the economic crisis had been felt, this book examines the nature of unemployment in Australia and its social consequences. Windschuttle argues that unemployment cannot be solved by a capitalist economy that responds to profit rather than to human need, and ties his argument together by indicating the links between the economic system and other institutions of society, particularly politics, welfare, and education.

About the author



David Dawkins worked in a variety of clerical and other occupations before entering university as a mature-age student to major in sociology and education. He taught in Papua New Guinea and the State College of Victoria before taking up a position as lecturer at Deakin University.

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